Wing B2187: 1 of 2
by Thomas Beverley

THE

Woe of Scandal:

OR,

SCANDAL

In its General

NATURE and EFFECTS;

DISCOURS'D,

As one ſtrongeſt Argument againſt *Impoſitions* in Religious Things acknowledg'd to be *Indifferent*.

By Mr Samuel Clark

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THAT which I will endeavour in preparation to the following Diſcourſe, ſhall be to preſent my Deſign and Method in ſtating the Nature of *Scandal*, that it may be more intelligible by being ſeen firſt, as in a Landſcape, in this Entry; and then to add ſome Conſiderations of great ſtrength to each part of that Undertaking, that have ſince arrived to my Thoughts.

As to the Method, I muſt in my own defence ſay, that I have to do with a Subject, in which ſo much of the *deceitfulneſs of Sin* is treaſured up, of ſo moveable a conſideration, (as Scripture from its own various ſhapes offers it to us) that

it cannot eaſily be known, or trac'd: I hope therefore it will be allowed as ſome part of an *Apology*, that the Thread of my Treating concerning it, does not run ſo even, and ſtreight along, as it ought.

Further, I muſt take Sanctuary at the Reader's Candor, for the acceptance of my ſincere intention, and any degree of performance in ſo difficult a task: I confeſs the want of the moſt advantageous Arts of Method, and a clear unperplexed Style: Yet that I might take the trueſt meaſure of ſo multiform and vague a Notion;

1. I have taken hold of it in the moſt ſtrict and preciſe Deſcription I could frame, as it is applicable to all caſes of Sin, therein reſting eſpecially upon thoſe words Scripture uſes to convey the ſentiments of it to us. Thus *Scandal* is that by which we are drawn into any ſin, and off from the courſe of Duty, and Religious Action, and ſo intangled in Guilt, diſeaſe of Conſcience, and indangered as to Eternal Happineſs, under a pretext of Reaſon or Religion.

2. Becauſe *I* find the Scripture applies the Notion of *Scandal* eſpecially, when ſome of the grand Principles and Laws of Religion are violated under ſuch pretext; I have conſidered it,

it, as referred to thoſe great Principles by ſuch ſacred uſe.

3. Becauſe there is a very peculiar, and moſt remarkable uſe of it, in the caſe of *indifferent* Things, by the *Apoſtle*, when they are turned into ſin, by being determined upon in practice with a *doubting Conſcience* (beſides other ways, wherein being uſed amiſs, they may become *Scandals*, or occaſions of it) I have therefore allowed a very peculiar Head of Diſcourſe to that Caſe.

4. Becauſe by deeply conſidering *Scandal*, and that, as our Saviour pronounces, *Scandals muſt needs come*, I found there muſt be ſome *Primitive*, *Fundamental*, and *Univerſal Scandal*, that covers the whole State of Sin in general; I addreſſed the laſt part of my Meditation on the Nature of *Scandal*, to this *Primitive*, *Univerſal Scandal*.

And laſtly, I reſume upon the whole, a repreſentation of *Scandal* adjuſted to what I found upon each of thoſe forementioned Inquiries after it.

And herein I hope I may have hung up Lights to diſcover in ſome degree, and to avoid ſo dark and myſterious an Evil, as *Scandal*, though

I have not been able to do it to thoſe degrees I deſired, or to compoſe into ſo happy an Order, or ſo perſpicuous an Expreſſion, what I had my ſelf clearer apprehenſions of. Thus far as to the Method.

Now for the ſtrengthening ſome parts of this diſcourſe by Conſiderations that have arrived to my Thoughts, ſince I had ſet an end to the Treatiſe it ſelf; they have ariſen from the cloſe obſervation of the Contexture of the *Lord's* Sermon upon *Scandal*, as it is Recorded eſpecially in this 18*th* of *Matthew*, and *Mark* 9. and *Luke* 17. Compared with the Debates of the *Apoſtle* to the *Romans*, and the *Corinths*, which are the moſt eminent Seats of the Doctrin of *Scandal*, we have in all the Scripture.

Our Saviour therefore, whoſe chief buſineſs into the World, was his recovery of it from *Scandal*, the Deception, and the Ruin of it, by giving ſatisfaction to the Divine Glory, for the diſhonour done to it by *Scandal*, hath bleſſed us with as Soveraign Arguments and Inſtructions againſt either giving or receiving it.

Our Lord hath ſo embraced all ſorts and degrees of *Scandal* within this Sermon, that none can be exempted from the force and energy of thoſe

thoſe his Arguments, Inſtructions, or ſevere Denunciations. But yet, that they have a particular poignancy againſt *Scandals* within his *Church*, and one more particular kind, given by a particular ſort of Men, and directed againſt another particular ſort of Men, will be moſt evident from the ſurvey I am now to give of his *Heaven-born Diſcourſe.*

The occaſion of it was the Diſciples coming ſolemnly to him with a grand Quere, in which no doubt their Ambition, a very ignorant Ambition, was deeply concerned. *Who*, ſay they, *is the greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*? That is, as was generally underſtood at that time, in the *Kingdom of the Meſſiah.*

The Lord, as he was wont on all ſuch Queſtions, takes the occaſion of moſt Grave, Weighty, and Important Doctrine, and Admonition in return to it.

And that he might place in his Remonſtrance a moſt lively Emblem; He calls a *little Child*, and *ſets him in the midſt of the Diſciples*: and upon him diſplays theſe two great points of Truth.

1. That except a *man be converted, and become as a little Child, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; either of Chriſt here in the *Goſpel*, and his

his *True Church*, or the *Kingdom of Heaven* hereafter.

Now though this being *Converted*, and becoming as *little Children*, be very profitably, and pertinently applyed to Regeneration; yet, conſidering it in the Scope, and whole Context, it is very evidently deſigned to that Humility, Unimperiouſneſs, ſenſe of the danger of periſhing for ever; Innocency, and Inoffenſiveneſs from *Scandal*, by which others periſh: The reſemblances of which are found no where in this World ſo agreeable and ſignificant, as in ſome Properties of *little Children*, and their Nature; the manly ſtate of Humane Nature, ſhewing ſo little hereof in this great Degeneracy, as to require a perfect *Converſion*, and *Regeneration* to ſuch a ſtate.

2. The ſecond point of Truth is this, That whoever *humbles himſelf*, and becomes as ſuch a *little Child*, in thoſe Chriſtian Properties, is one of thoſe *Great ones*, thoſe *Magnates*; or the more any one *humbles himſelf* ſo, the greater he is; and he that *humbles himſelf* moſt, is the *greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*, in the *Kingdom of the Meſſiah*, and ſhall be in the *Kingdom of Glory*.

Theſe

These two great Points of Instruction being now settled upon this living Emblem, the *Lord* proposes the very same to other two as great purposes of Admonition, although from another aspect or cast of this one Picture: Consider *Little Ones*, as the Emblems of Weakness, Infirmity, liableness to Danger and Injury, of little Defence and Resistance to any Assault; and so the *Lord* declares:

1. Whoever *receives* such a *little one in his name*, that is, upon the account of Profession of Jesus Christ, into a just esteem, value, and care, of cherishing such a one in that Holy Profession, and securing him, as far as he can, in the Blessedness of that state; receives, that is owns and acknowledges with Honour, Christ himself, and the kindness is accepted, as if it were immediately placed upon Christ.

2. But if any one *Scandalises*, sets a stone of *Offence* and Ruin, in the path of such a *Little One*, by which he falls from, or in, his Profession of Christianity to his Destruction, the *Lord* pronounces *a Woe* upon such a one, as dreadful as the Proverb imports, *It were better that a Millstone were hung about his Neck, and he were cast into the depth of the Sea:* Which as it peremptori-

ly dooms the Profeſſed, obſtinate *Scandaliſer*, ſo it warns all of managing themſelves ſo in Chriſtianity, as to caſt off all *Offence* and *Scandal* from it, and to encourage the tendereſt in it, to ſtrengthen, and promote them.

Hereby then, *our Lord* hath deſigned the ſecurity of the whole ſtate of Chriſtianity from the harm and danger of *Scandal*; for in theſe *Little Ones* he comprehends,

1. Thoſe, who in regard of their being newborn out of the State of Univerſal *Scandal*, are in danger of being re-intangled in its Net, or in regard of any other diſadvantage, or liableneſs to *Scandals* miſchief, are the *loſt*, as our Saviour after ſtiles them, and the weak, though not the young, (as the Apoſtle names them.) Now if ſuch are ſecured, all are ſecured: For if a Chriſtians carriage be ſo off from the danger of *Scandaliſing*, as not to *Scandaliſe* the *weak*, the ſtronger will be much leſs in danger to be *offended*.

2. Thoſe are the *weak*, and the *Little Ones* to us, who appear to us under any ſuch diſadvantage, though indeed they are not; as he that *doubts*, and dares not do what others profeſs to do on great aſſurances, ſeems weak to them that *doubt* not, but are ſo aſſured; and then the

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Precept of Chriſt takes as great hold of us, in all our Adminiſtrations towards them, as if they were really ſo. Now what a Wall of defence were this to Chriſtianity! what a happy ſtate would the ſtate of it be! if we were all moſt tender towards thoſe, with relation to their ſafety for Eternal Happineſs, who ſeem the loweſt, weakeſt, leaſt to us in that Profeſſion?

3. The Term, *Little Ones*, expreſſes a ſubordination under the *Great Ones:* Now that they may not aſſume over the *Little Ones*, the *Lord* firſt affirms, with his uſual Aſſeveration, that none can be *Great*, or any thing at all in his *Kingdom*, that is not humble and inoffenſive, as a *Little One*. And that if any that takes himſelf to be a *Great One*, thinks he has priviledge to do as he pleaſes, either by Impoſition, or Imperiouſneſs over the *Little Ones*, and does not in all points of Chriſtianity, demean himſelf as the leaſt under one common *Lord*, the Lords dreadful Commination hangs over him, he is in danger to be One of the Grandees in Torments.

On thoſe things therefore, that lye within the Compare betwixt the *Great Ones* and the *Little Ones*, does the Finger of the Lords Diſcourſe eſpecially point.

But though our Lord was moſt feelingly concerned, and ſtruck the moſt ſtinging *Woe* into thoſe that *Scandaliſe* them that believe in him; yet he did not overlook the World in general, but bewailed it periſhing under *Scandals*, the multitude of *Scandals*, the inevitableneſs of *Scandals*, that they *muſt needs come*, even impoſſible they ſhould not *come*; and yet becauſe he knew what Spirit it is that acts *Scandal*, even from *Satan* the chief of *Scandal*, down through all the *Miniſters* of it, he heaps the *Woe* upon him by whom *Scandal comes*. Of which I have endeavoured a full account in the after-management.

And becauſe whoever *Scandaliſes* others, is firſt *Scandaliſed* himſelf, and they alſo, that receive *Scandal* from others, have ſome great *Scandal* within, upon which that from without catches; he therefore ſo ſeverely cautions on all ſides againſt the *Scandal* of the *Right Eye*, the *Right Hand*, the *Right Foot*, and prefers to every mans choice the diſmembring any of them, rather than that the whole Body joyned to that Member, ſo fettered with *Scandal*, ſhould be *caſt into Hell, where their Worm dies not*, and their *Fire is never quenched*, the *dreadful end of Scandal*.

Next

Next follow the Arguments with which our Lord preſſes the higheſt value, and care over the leaſt of them that believe in him, not to *offend* them.

1. He ſhews at the ſame time, how honourable the Employment in ſerving the little ones is, and alſo of how dangerous a conſequence it is to *deſpiſe them* (which, both by the relation it hath to the Context, and the *Apoſtles* uſe of it, cannot be far from *Scandaliſing*.) The Angels ſuffer no diſparagement, in being called *their Angels*. And the very mention of *Angels* brings to mind, *the Charge they have over all* ſuch, to *bear them up in their hands, to guard them in all their ways, that they may not daſh their foot againſt* any of the *ſtones of Scandal. They are Miniſtring* Spirits, *ſent forth to Miniſter for them that ſhall be Heirs of Salvation: Thoſe greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven humble themſelves as* Little Ones, *to ſerve the* Little Ones *of God and Chriſt.*

And, as *their Angels, they always behold in Heaven the Father of our* Lord, and of all that *believe in him*, that whoever *deſpiſes* them, even to *Scandal*, muſt be ſure to have it remonſtrated againſt them.

2. He exemplifies the care of them in himſelf:

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The Son of Man is come to ſeek and ſave that which
i *s loſt*; and the Argument is raiſed to the height, as it is exemplified in the *Father of the whole Family in Heaven* and *Earth*, *named after Chriſt*; *whoſe will it is not*, that ſo much as *one* (and yet when *one* only is in the danger of *Scandal*, Who does not look upon him as a Singulariſt, eſpecially if *one of the leaſt too*, and reject him?) *ſhould periſh*, but is pleaſed in the preſervation of *one* ſuch; even as the *joy of one Sheep*, that is *loſt* out of a *hundred*, exceeds ſenſibly the *joy of the ninety nine* that were not in hazard.

But now leſt the great charge againſt *Scandaliſing* and *Deſpiſing* ſhould ſeem to introduce a Lawleſs ſtate in Chriſtianity, and increaſe Petulancy, and Licentiouſneſs in thoſe, who would be looked upon as, at leaſt, *Little Ones* in Chriſtianity, or make the care of not *Scandaliſing* of endleſs ſcruple, or burden; *Our Lord* preſcribes a Method for preventing ſo ill Conſequences, very certain to its End, yet very far from *Scandal* or *Deſpiſing*.

A Method that allows no ſin, and yet deſerts none, till they deſerve to be accounted but as *Heathens* or *Publicans*, to whom yet a due meaſure of Chriſtian Charity is to be preſerved.

Into

Which Method it is not my buſineſs now to enter into the Controverſal part of, but to obſerve, as of great moment, that the *Doubting* of the lawful uſe of *Indifferent Things* in Religion, falls not into the account of any of thoſe *Treſpaſſes the Lord* ſpeaks of; and that, as if it were on purpoſe leſt the thing ſhould be miſtaken, a moſt different Method is in that Caſe commanded by the *Apoſtle of the Lord.*

Here therefore give me liberty to compare, in ſome things which I have omitted in the body of the Diſcourſe, the Sermon of our *Lord* and his *Apoſtle.*

Firſt, He that doubts in *Indifferent* Things, and cannot conform to what others do, and would be conformed to in, is not commanded by the *Apoſtle* to hear the *one*, or the *two*, or *three*, nor the *Church* it ſelf.

Nor is it ſaid by the *Apoſtle*, they that will not *hear* on ſuch accounts, ſhould be as *Heathen-men*, or *Publicans*, (or as we ſpeak, *Excommunicate*) both which are very notorious in the *Evangeliſts Records*, in the Caſe of the *Treſpaſſes* there ſpoken of, which aſſures us they are of another Nature.

Nor doth the *Apoſtle* urge as from our Saviour, that what is in theſe Caſes *bound on Earth*, ſhall

ſhall be *bound in Heaven*; or *what is looſed on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven*; that there ſhall be any obligation on the *doubting Conſcience* by the *Churches Canons*, or any ſuch diſcharge of it before God or it ſelf by obeying them: But every Man in this Caſe is to *hear* his *own Conſcience*, there every thing of this nature is *bound* and *looſed*; there every *word* or *matter* is *heard* and *eſtabliſhed*.

On the other ſide, there is no Injunction of *telling the fault* of Non-Conformity, if any be aggrieved at it, in that gradation from *one* to more, and ſo to the *Church*.

But the *Apoſtle's* command is, Firſt, Not to *Judge*, or *Deſpiſe*, if that may keep *Indifferents* to their Equipoiſe; if not, the Command is, not ſo much as by *Example* to *Scandaliſe*, or draw any that *Doubt* to act againſt, or over their *Doubt* in *Indifferent* Things, becauſe they are but *Indifferent*; for that is to *ſin againſt the Brethren*, the *weak Brethren*; as at the leaſt we eſteem them: Now in theſe Caſes, *to ſin againſt the Brethren, is to ſin againſt Chriſt in his Law againſt Scandal*.

Now in that all things are of ſo diverſe a frame and aſpect in the *Lords* Preſcriptions concerning *Treſpaſſes*, and the *Apoſtle's Directions* in caſes of various apprehenſions in things of *Indifferency*,

differency, wherein one great part may be guilty yet of great *weakneſs* and miſtake, and that none of the Methods ordered in the one, is ſo much as mentioned in the other, or once intimated; it argues very evidently, that variety, and as various practices in *indifferent* Things, though joined with ſuch miſtake and weakneſs, are none of the *Treſpaſſes* our *Saviour* had regard to. And ſince the *Apoſtle* puts all under the notion of *Scandal*, wherein the weaker part is either drawn into ſin, enfeebled in the vigour, diſquieted in the true peace of Conſcience, or ſo much as *deſpiſed*, by being incompaſſionately neglected in his *Doubt*; the whole Caſe is brought under the force of our *Saviour*'s Sermon againſt *Scandal*, that none looking upon themſelves on any accounts, as *Great* in the *Kingdom of* God, in the *Church*, or in the *Chriſtian Profeſſion* (let thoſe Accounts be whatever they can be preſumed to be) ſhould by any ſort of Imperiouſneſs, whether Command, rigorous Treaty, or *Example*, that *deſpiſes all* that do not follow it, impoſe upon the *Little Ones*.

To all which let me have the Readers patience to add this one Obſervation, That the *Evangeliſt Mark* makes the occaſion of this, or a like Diſ-

courſe of the *Lords* upon *Scandal*, That the Diſciples were much diſpleaſed that one did *caſt out Devils in Chriſts name*, that did not *follow them*; that did not ſeem, and indeed was not of their way, in the appearance of Things. But our Lord, with great Compaſſion, accepts him ſo far as he was come. For, ſaith he, *He that is not againſt us, is on our part.* He that, although in a different Company, or Mode, does the ſame things we do, and does nothing in oppoſition to our Great Deſign, is on *our ſide.* And ſo he proceeds into a ſimilar Diſcourſe of Kindneſs to, or *Scandal* againſt his Diſciples, though *Little Ones.* And if we ſuppoſe it the ſame Diſcourſe as in St. *Matthew*, and that this *Evangeliſt* had not an accurate regard to the occaſion; yet in that he connected it with ſuch an occaſion, and that by the Divine *Wiſdom*, it teaches us how much ſuch a Diſcourſe is adjuſted to ſuch an occaſion; for guided by the Holy Spirit, the things are ſo laid together.

Now that the *Apoſtle* had his Eye upon theſe ſo famous Diſcourſes, beſides the Reaſons I have given on this Head in its due place, it is evident to me further he had ſo, by his Repreſentation of himſelf in a *Figure*, all along the ninth *Chap.* of his

Firſt

First Epistle to the *Corinths*, in the very heart of a Discourse concerning *Scandal*; as that *Person* that *humbles himself*, as a *Little Child*, in so many Remarkable Instances: His Little-Child-like Inoffensiveness, his easie Recession from his Just Rights for the *Gospels* sake, his *Inoffensiveness* and *Desire to please all*, to *win* upon all, that they might *be saved*, his dread of Danger, lest *whilst he Preached to others, he himself should become a Cast-away*. Nor ever was there a clearer Comment upon *cutting off the Right Hand*, and Foot, and *plucking* out the *Right Eye*, than his weighty Admonition of being *Temperate in all things*, and *bringing the Body into subjection*.

One thing more I cannot but yet adjoin, that the *Apostle* is so wary of Imposing upon any one in *Indifferent* Things, appertaining to Religion, in a positive, or affirmative kind of observance, that though for the avoiding *Scandal*, he dehorts from *Eating Meats*, or *drinking Wine*, that may *Scandalise* any in the very Eye of their *Doubting Conscience*, and draw them into Sin: yet he no where, to the same purpose of avoiding *Scandal*, perswades to the esteeming, or observing a *Day to the Lord*; though another may be *Scandalised* if he does not so. Such abstinence (yet in a full Free-

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dom of Thoughts) being a much easier performance of Charity, extending only to *Meats* in *Doubt*, under the Eye of the *Doubting mind*; but *observing a Day*, requires direct acts of Devotion; From laying the obligation of which upon any Man, the *Apostle* hath wholly withdrawn his Hand, even in case of *Scandal*, and only preserves from *Despisal* such a *doubting Christian*, and then only, when the Out-date of the Divine Command for such observance, was but just come, and not fully understood, *Pag.* 38. *l.* 25. What therefore I have intimated contrary to this Account, I retract as not fully considered.

And I now *bow my Knees to the God and Father of our* Lord *Jesus Christ*, the *Father of Glory*, that he would inspire the Hearts of Civil, and Ecclesiastical Governors, who are constituted as *Guardian Angels* of Conscience against *Scandal*, and of all Christians in general, that *out of his Kingdom*, throughout the World, and particularly in this Nation, may be *gathered all such things that offend*, and *all those that work iniquity* on account of Them.

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THE
Woe of Scandal.

Matth. XVIII. 7.

Woe unto the World, becauſe of Offences, (or Scandals) *for it muſt needs be that Offences* (or Scandals) *come; but woe to that Man, by whom the Offence* (or Scandal) *comes.*

A Free uſe of the word, *Scandal*, and to *Scandaliſe*, for *Offence* or to *Offend*, can need no Apology, the Original being ſo well known, and now, become *Engliſh*, more ſignificant of the thing intended, than the other.

Of which *Scandal, our Saviour* was in a deep and intenſe Contemplation in this Chapter, and of the ſtate of things becauſe of it, both in his *Church* and the *World*; in the *World* eſpecially, as it confines upon his *Church*, is in the Neighbourhood of it, and view of what is done in it; or indeed, as within the Armes of it, by a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, though an unſound and inſincere Profeſſion; for ſo there is the *World* in the *Church*, as well as the *Church* in the *World*.

The Lord turns himſelf to behold and obſerve this *Scandal*, how it diſcharges it ſelf on all ſides with Woe, Miſchief, and Ruine; and with Compaſſion foretells and warns all of it, as of the moſt deſtructive way of ſinning, the moſt to be abhorred kind of Miſchief and Ruine.

This muſt needs make every thinking Chriſtian afraid of *Scandal*, of having any thing to do with it, either in giving, or receiving it; and much more of being a Projector, or Puſher of it on in the World, and moſt of all in the *Church*. Now to this whole Diſcourſe there will be a continual occaſion to have recourſe in this Treatiſe: But the words themſelves offer to Conſideration theſe Three Propoſitions.

1. That the preſent ſtate of the World is ſuch, that *Scandals muſt needs come*. *Scandal* is very preſſing, and crowding in upon the World; in regard of its multitude, its Name is *Legion*; it throngs the World; *our Saviour* expreſſes it in its number, *Scandals*: In regard of its vehemency, or importunity, it muſt needs be that *Scandal* comes. It thruſts in every where, it perverts the beſt things, and twines about them; it plays in things Indifferent, how much more in things purely Evil.

Scandal comes, it *comes* as an Eagle haſteth to the Prey; it *comes* ſupping, and blaſting as an Eaſt Wind; it *comes* as an Invader with its Troops. And the World, how willing is it to receive *Scandal*? It calls for, and invites it, it opens all Gates and Doors to it; it even ſurrenders and betrays it ſelf to it; it is mad after *Scandal*, both to give, and receive it: *It muſt needs be* then that *Scandals come*.

Propoſ. 2. Yet the *World* lies under great Miſery, becauſe of the multitude of *Scandals*, the Efficacy of *Scandal* upon it: It is more miſerable, in regard of *Scandal*, than meerly in regard of Sin. For when *the Lord* Emphatically denounces *a Woe upon the World*, becauſe of *Scandal*, he intends ſomething more, than the Scripture generally declares againſt Sin,

Sin, and Sinners; for that is a known Case, that there is a *Woe upon* Sin; *Our Saviour* remonstrates this case as more rarely, and yet of all most necessary to be understood, observed, and profoundly considered. And though it will appear, it is always in the Sense of Scripture joined with Sin; yet it hath thus much more of Danger in it, than that meerly it is sinful: It is Sin some way guarded and defended against Divine Truth, and so holds *its Goods more in Peace.*

Its wound is no less deadly, yet more secret and unexpected, and therefore the worst sort of Death: It is an Ambush of Death.

In the Sin of *Scandal* most eminently it is, even as in that most Enchanting Sin, That *a Man goes after it, as an Oxe to the Slaughter, and as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks; till a Dart strike through his Liver: As a Bird hasteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for its Life: Scandal wipes its Mouth,* when it destroys, and says, *It hath done no wickedness; when it speaketh fair, there are seven Abominations under it.*

As against those Men of *Scandal*, the *Pharisees*, so against *Scandal* it self, hath the most merciful *Saviour* of the World made his keenest Remarks.

There is still, however guilty *the World* be, an *Accumulative Woe* and Misery upon that Man, by whom the *Scandal cometh*; *Woe to the World*; *but Woe to him*; by which *our Saviour* does not yet intend every one that Administers *Scandal*; for so good Men often do in the doing their Duties; even himself, his Doctrine, was an *occasion of stumbling*, and *a Rock of offence*; nor is every Man pointed at here, that through Error, or fall into Sin, offers *Scandal*; though this *Woe* spreads far in some degrees of it, upon the Generality of Mankind; yea, upon every Man without Repentance, seeing all Men, one way or other, guiltily convey *Scandal* along. *Propos.* 3.

But there are some Engineers, some Masters, some prime Ministers of *Scandal*, that as the *Sons of Perdition* push on *Scandal* in the World, and are obstinately bent to do so; and on such a sort of Men *our Saviour* principally fixes *this Woe*.

Now for the discoursing this great point of *Scandal*, upon these three Fundamental Propositions, I shall observe this Order:

1. I will endeavour to settle a just Notion of *Scandal*, and being *Scandalised*, and so inlarge into the whole compass of *Scandal*, in the general knowledge of it from *Scripture*.

2. I will set my self to a pure and distinct Consideration of *Scandal*, as it hath such a peculiar Interest, as it appears to have, in those Debates of the *Apostle*, concerning Indifferent things in Religion, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, *Cap.* 14. and to the *Corinthians*, 1 *Ep. Cap.* 8. and 10.

3. I'le discourse the Reasons why *Scandals must needs come*.

4. The *Worlds woefull state*, because of *Scandals*, shall be demonstrated.

5. I will consider the Principal Authors of *Scandal*, that are as the *Angels of Satan* in the World to that purpose.

6. The whole shall be, in the last place, applyed to Practice.

I begin with the Notion of *Scandal*, which is a Metaphorical expression, taken from those Engines that are contrived and prepared on purpose for a surprizal into Mischief and Destruction, and accordingly dispos'd covertly into a Mans way and passage; or from what is naturally, usefully, or accidentally and carelesly placed in such way or passage, so as that a Man unawares falls upon it; as either Gin, Snare, or Trap; or sharp Stakes, or Stones, that gall and cut Mens Feet, if not removed or avoided;

Stones

Stones or Blocks that lye in the Path they are to walk, and occaſion their ſtumbling, and fall; oftentimes to their Death and Ruine, and always to their inconvenience, hazzard, and danger.

All which Importances of the Word, applyed to the ſeveral purpoſes of the *Scripture-uſe* in their Proprieties, may be ſeen more at large, in the moſt Learned Dr. *HAMMOND*'s *Diſcourſe*, and *Annotations upon Scandal.*

I ſhall onely obſerve out of the *Old Teſtament*, as one Inſtance of many that might be made; That the ſame word that is uſed to expreſs the * *ſtumbling Block*, that *God* forbids *to put before* the *Blind* in *Leviticus*, paſſes out of the Litteral Senſe there, into the Moral Senſe in the *Prophet Ezekiel*, for *the ſtumbling Block of a Mans iniquity*, which he *puts before his Face*; and the *ſtumbling Blocks* with the *Wicked*, in the *Prophet Zephany.*

* מכשל

Levit. 19. 14.

Ezek. 14. 3.

Zephan. 1. 3.

Other the like Tranſlations of the ſame, and other Words of like Importance, from their Native to this Moral intendment, might be gathered together, but that this one ſo plainly leads us into the main point, and is ſo pregnant for the deſcribing *Scandal*; which may be thus repreſented.

Scandal is a prevailing Temptation to ſome great Sin, or courſe of Sin, cauſing the Soul to fall before it, or catching and inwrapping the Soul in it, and all the dreadful Conſequences of it, covered under the diſguiſe and plauſible pretence of a *Principle of Reaſon*, or *Doctrine of Religion*, to its greateſt Miſchief and Ruine, if not recovered from it, by the *Grace of God*, and *ſincere Repentance.*

1. *Scandal* is thus when it prevails, when it ſucceeds to its unhappy Effect of *Scandaliſing*: For a *Scandal* may be offered, and not take. Our *Saviour* had a *Scandal* offered him by *Peter* his own *Apoſtle*: *Thou art a Scandal to me*, ſaith our Lord, when he preſented him a pretext, a fair ſhew of Reaſon againſt ſuffering, which was the very Law

Matt. 16. 22, 23.

of

of his Mediation in the World, impos'd upon him by God. The Suffering yet of ſo Innocent, ſo Divine, and excellent a Perſon, look'd like a Prodigy, and monſtrous portent to the *Apoſtle*; not once to be ſpoken or thought of, *Be it far from thee, Lord*; but our *Saviour* immediately diſcharg'd himſelf of it, in that ſevere rebuke, *Get thee behind me Satan.* Thou art in this to me an *Angel of Satan*, the firſt Inventer, the ſupream Creator of *Scandal.*

The Saints, and Servants of God, have *Scandals* continually contrived into their Paths; *but God withholds their Feet from being taken; He hath charged himſelf with them, to keep them in all their Ways: He bears them up in his Hand, that they may not, to their Ruine, daſh their Feet againſt any of theſe Stones.*

Scandals are ſo many, and ſo great, as *to undoe, if it were poſſible*, the very Elect; but for the *Elects ſake*, the Effective Power of *Scandal is ſhortened.*

2. *Scandal* is a *Temptation*; what the *Evangeliſt Matthew* calls being *Scandaliſed*, or *Offended*, the *Evangeliſt Luke* expreſſes by *falling away in a Time of Temptation.*

Matt. 13. 21. Luk. 8. 13.

Scandal differs nothing from that Deſcription of the *Apoſtle James*: Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Luſt, and enticed. Then Luſt, *when it hath conceived, brings forth Sin, and Sin, when it is finiſhed, brings forth Death.* I ſay it differs nothing, but that in *Scandal* the *Temptation* is covered: Luſt, Inordinate Affection, is always at the bottom of *Scandal:* All *Scandals* againſt Religion, or any of the Truths, Commands, or Duties of it, have their Root in Luſts and ſinful Corruption within: Herein they are juſtly chargeable to Condemnation; the *Scandal* within is the great *Scandal.*

Jam. 1. 14.

He that hath an impure Affection quenched into *the love of the Law of God*, hath nothing to *Offend*, or *Scandaliſe* him. *Scandal finds no place in him: He that loves his Brother*, and God in him, *hath no occaſion of Scandal in him.*

Pſal 119. 156. 1 John 2. 10.

But

But *Scandal* is *Temptation* ſo covered, as I have deſcribed, and therein it differs from meer *Temptation*. Many *Temptations* to Sin are barefac'd, and have nothing but Pleaſure, Profit, or Vain-Glory to bait the Hook with; *the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, the Pride of Life*; all which leave the ſin naked, or the covering is at leaſt ſo thin, that Conſcience is not at all impos'd upon. But *Scandal* hath the ſeemingly fair Recommendation of a *Principle of Reaſon*, or *Doctrine of Religion*, how falſe ſoever.

And therefore, though in a free way of ſpeaking, a man is *Scandaliſed* by his *Right Eye*, *his Right Hand*, *his Right Foot*, interpreting them of his Luſt getting the Aſcendant over his Judgment and Conſcience; that has nothing of excuſe, but that he in whom it dwells has made it ſo neceſſary to him, that it is become part of himſelf; yet ſpeaking more accurately, and according to the general courſe of Holy Writing, *Scandal* is *Temptation* ſhaddowed and ſheltered; there is ſome Screen betwixt the Eye of Conſcience, and defenceleſs Guilt; ſome Attire of Vertue or Reaſon about the Sin.

There may be ſome places, where *Scandal* may be very near ſignifying nothing but *Temptation*; but generally there is as much difference, as between *Davids* Fall into Murder and Adultery; and *Peters* Denial of *his Lord*; the one was *plain Temptation*, the other *Scandal*, ariſing from the, to him, uninterpretable Suffering of our Saviour; though both were great and grievous Sins.

3. *Scandal* is a *Temptation* to ſome great Sin, or courſe of Sin: For though the leaſt Sin introduc'd upon the Counterfeit of Religion, and Reaſon, is truly *Scandal*, and partakes in its *Woe*. Yet thoſe *Scandals* of daily almoſt unavoidable Incurſion in this imperfect State are broken in their deadly effect, by the daily and general Repentance and deſire of Pardon, and Faith in the Blood of Jeſus, all true Converts live in the Practice of. *Who*

Who can understand his Scandals? Deliver thou me from secret ones, may every good man pray. *But keep back thy Servant from Insolent Scandals, that they may not have Dominion,* so that *I be Innocent and free from the great Transgression.*

The sins that *Scandal* precipitates upon, may be either in the refusal, disavowment, rejection, or despight to some of the prime manifestations of God in the World, in Infidelity or Unbelief, or some great Enormity of Practice; and it may be absolv'd and finished in some Notorious Act of Sin; or may run through the whole Course of a mans Life, in an habitual State of sin, or Transgression of the Rule, that he acts in all a-long, Lives and dies in this *Snare of Satan,* in this *Captivity* under him.

It may be partial only, there being a reserve of the Soul preserv'd by Grace, by which the renewed Soul recovers it self; as the *Apostles* were *Offended,* or *Scandalis'd* in *Christ* on the Night of his Passion; and *Peter* in a fouler manner; and yet theirs, even *his Faith did not fail.* They and he most Eminently escap'd out of *the broken Snare.* But men devoid of any Principle of true saving Grace, are, though in several degrees, lock'd within the *Scandal,* and cannot be rescued out of it, but by a *Renovation* to *Repentance,* the *first Repentance.*

Yea, even the best men, under the power of *Scandal,* as we now discribe it, are for the present inwrap'd and involv'd; so that the whole man seems to fall, and the whole strength for that time so far, as is visible, is taken Captive.

Now by all this that hath been spoken, it is undeniable, that a Man is never *Scandalised,* but when he sins; he is not *Offended* in this *Scripture-sense,* but when he himself Offends: To be justly displeas'd with other mens sins, or defiling Religion with impure mixtures, is not to be *Offended*; but when a man himself displeases and offends God, and against his Duty.

4. *Scandal*

4. *Scandal* inwraps in Sin, and the dreadful conſequents of it; for in the miſchief and deadly iſſue of Sin, is the complemental nature, and notion of *Scandal*.

It is in *the way of Righteouſneſs* onely, that there is *Life*, and in *the Path-way thereof*, that there *is no Death*, none of the beginnings and firſt ſtrokes of it, of the avant Couriers of Death. It is *Wiſdom* alone that is *Health to the Navel*, and *Marrow to the Bones*; *whoſe ways are ways of pleaſantneſs*, and *all its paths are Peace*.

But the ways of *Scandal*, ſo cloſely united with Sin, though they ſeem right in a Mans own Eyes, yet are all along *the ways of Death*, and moſt evidently ſo in *their end*.

Guilt, Divine diſpleaſure, Perplexity, Anguiſh of Mind, Grief, if the Sin be felt; however a *wound*, a *ſtripe* upon *Conſcience*, and a mark of that ſtroke, of that *wound* and *ſtripe*, whether felt or not; that can never be worn off, but by Repentance, and Faith in the Blood of Chriſt: Weakneſs, Inability, loſs of Vigour, to a Holy Life and Action, and often down right Apoſtacy, are the Fruits of *Scandal*; for every Sin is a prejudice, a mortification, or *dead works upon the Conſcience*, diſpiriting it to Holineſs more and more: It is the *way of Righteouſneſs* that is *ſtrength to the upright*, and the *joy of the Lord* therein, is his *double ſtrength*.

Through *Scandal* Men *ſtumble* and *fall*, are diſcouraged and lye down at length out of Choice, and with reſolution to continue where they are, as moſt eaſie: *Qui jacet in terris, non habet unde cadat*: Upon all this enſues at laſt Eternal Death, if not prevented by Repentance.

5. *Scandal* is covered under ſome plauſible pretence, or diſguiſe of a principle of Reaſon, or Doctrine of Religion.

For Reaſon being an efflux from God the *Sovereign Reaſon*, and *Light from the Father of Lights*, any true principle of true Reaſon, and rightly applyed, is undoubtedly a *Divine Oracle*, and would juſtifie any pretenſion grounded upon it.

Now in all Caſes wherein *Divine Revelation* is refuſed or avowedly forced from the genuine Senſe, becauſe either *the Revelation*, or all *Natural Interpretation* will not ſerve the turn of *Scandal*, but detects and expoſes it; it then flyes under an *umbrage of Reaſon*, as ſeparated from ſuch *Revelation*, or ſets it up to limit and control ſuch *Revelation*.

But if it profeſſes to own the *Scripture*, it then ſerves it ſelf of *Divine Revelation*, but *wreſted* and *miſ-applyed*; for the higher the Authority is, that is vouched and pretended, the deeper the Scandal; as we may ſee in the *Phariſees*, the greateſt, both Maſters and Bondmen of Scandal, that ever were in the World, (except the Galley Slaves of it in the *Romans Antichriſtianiſme*) and they were ſo, becauſe they were defended and flanked on all ſides, as they miſerably deluded themſelves, with the Authority of the *Old Teſtament*, *the Law*, and the Prophets, together with the, to them equall, or indeed ſuperiour, *awful Traditions* of the *Elders*, by which they circumſcribed and kept under the Authority and Senſe of *Scripture*, as the *Papiſts* do at this day, by like *Traditions*, and *Faith of their Church*.

Now all theſe, as they would have it, joyned in perpetuating the Ceremonial *Law*, as irreverſible by God himſelf, and ſettling an indefeaſible ſtate of Inheritance in the true Religion upon the *Jews* alone, without the calling of the *Gentiles* to be the People of God, but as their meer *Proſelytes*.

All theſe, as they deemed, repreſented a *Meſſiah* of quite another Figure, another Character, than our Saviour; and therefore he (as they concluded) muſt needs be an *Impoſtor*, and his *Doctrine Blaſphemy*; upon which *Rock of offence* the Veſſel of their Church, and even Nation it ſelf, beſides their particular Souls, was moſt diſmally Ship-wrack'd.

But not only things of ſo good a Title and Claim, as the *Jewiſh Religion*, are counter-ſcarf'd with a Doctrine; but even ſuch vile things as *Balaam taught*, *eating things Sacrificed to Idols*, in honour of the Idol, and *committing Fornication*, when contrived into *Scandal*, muſt have a *Doctrine* for them: For ſo the *Spirit of God* calls it, *the Doctrine of* Balaam: In *Scandal* even *Jezabel* puts on the *Vail of a Propheteſs*, and *calls her ſelf ſo*, and under it *teaches* and *ſeduces*; which may abate to us the wonder of *Romes* calling it ſelf a *Church*; and its *Adulteries*, *Sorceries*, and *Idolatries*, *Catholick*, *Chriſtian Religion*.

6. *Scandal* by ſuch a Principle of Reaſon, or Doctrine of Religion, *edifies*, or *emboldens Conſcience*: For although *Conſcience* was made for the *Divine Truth*, and *Law of God*, which is *the Truth*, and not for *Scandal*; it was made ſo even and true to it, that they which *love this Law*, *have great peace*, and nothing can *ſcandaliſe* or *offend them*; that is, either ſeduce or hurt them; yet in this very Seat, in this very Throne of the Divine Law, in this Temple of God, in this place of the Holy, this Tribunal of the Soul, that ought to be the Sanctuary of Truth and Righteouſneſs, and as a *Tabernacle of Teſtimony*, does *Scandal* exalt it ſelf, as if it were from God, and from thence it gives its *Oracles*; but *Conſcience* thus debauched and proſtituted, bears no more proportion to true *Conſcience*, than *Anti-chriſt* does to *Chriſt*, and is therefore a *pſeudo-Conſcience*, an *Anti-Conſcience*, *Conſcience falſly ſo called*.

7. *Scandal* always daſhes its own Principles of *deceived Reaſon*, and *falſe Doctrine*, upon ſome *true and grand Principle* of *Reaſon*, and *Doctrine of Religion*. For though every Truth of God is great, yet there are of the firſt magnitude; on account of which oppos'd, the Spirit of God brands it *Scandal* more remarkably; and hereupon, though the Sin derived from *Scandal* may in it ſelf ſeem ſmall; yet in regard of ſome *ſtable Law of Religion made void*, and thereby Sin introduced, it is a very great Sin, though in a matter of its own Nature ſometimes indifferent.

Now it cannot be otherwiſe, but *Scandal* muſt thus daſh upon Truth, becauſe, as I have ſaid, it herein differs from ſimple *Temptation*, that its reſt is upon ſome *falſe Principle of Reaſon*, or *Doctrine of Religion*; *it frames miſchief by a Law*; and it muſt needs be, that every *falſe Principle* and *Doctrine* muſt ruſh againſt ſome true one; and though no Truth of God be ſmall, or Sin little, and *Scandal* is always proportionable, yet the *wiſdom of Scripture* hath appropriated the name of *Scandal* to the violation of ſome *grand Principle*: As I ſhall now in the next place (for the further explaining of *Scandal*) obſerve thoſe Pillars of the *Divine Truth and Law*, againſt which it throws and bruiſes the *Scandaliſed* Soul, as the *Sacred Books* ſhall inſtruct us.

1. The Eternal Being, and Holy Government of God in the World, according to thoſe Righteous, Juſt, and Good Laws he hath given, and according to which he will Judge, and make Retribution to all Men, *at that great day*, is the Fountain, and moſt Fundamental Principle of Religion.

So then whatever, upon pretence of Reaſon and juſt cauſe, undermines the Faith, abates the Aws, or diſpirits the Obedience, agreeable to ſo ſupreame a ſtandard of all *theſe*, is the *Original* and *final Scandal*.

Here

Here all *Scandal* begins, in the decay of the Faith and Fear of God; and hither it returns: It ends in a further loſs of God, and this upon *offence* taken, that too much is required without reaſon.

This is that Eternal Rock of Truth, at which whoever ſtumbles, muſt needs be hurt, *wounded* and *grieved*: *Thus was I grieved in my Heart, and pricked in my Reins,* Pſal. 73. 21. ſaith the *Pſalmiſt* on this very occaſion. Whoever falls violently againſt it, it breaks him; whoever conteſts to remove it, and burdens himſelf with it, *it falls upon him, and grinds him to Powder.*

And yet againſt this, ſpeculative and practical Atheiſm hath in all Ages hardened it ſelf, and by ſhews of Reaſon, and high Spirit, been heaving and pecking at it, and caſting *Scandals* in all Mens way. Gods retirement (as they fancy it) into the *thick covering of the Clouds,* and the pleaſure of Job. 21. 14. walking in the *Circuit of Heaven,* and not coming down in viſible ſhapes of Glory and Power, have given to ungodly Men, the Boldneſs and a counterfeit of Argument to diſpute againſt his Being and Government: I ſay, a counterfeit of Argument; for with an Apparition of Reaſon from hence, and an Inſolency of Wickedneſs, they Conjure down they *Mormo* of Religion, and the *Goblin* of Conſcience, as they eſteem them.

Atheiſm hath always ſpoken *ſtout Words* againſt God; ſaying to God, *Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge* Mal. 3. 13. *of thy ways:* What *is the Almighty,* that we ſhould ſerve him? Or what profit is it, if we ſhould pray unto him? Job. 21. 14. It hath of old lifted up Men againſt God, and ſtretched out their hand againſt the Almighty; ſo that they have *run upon God,* even upon *the thick Boſſes of his Buckler,* to miſchief themſelves to the utmoſt.

In the very days of *Job,* there was this *Counſel of the* Job 10. 3. *wicked*; as if it was the reſult of debate, and ſerious con- *and* 21. 16. *and* 22. 18. ſideration, in a Senate of Atheiſts; as if they had made the Experiment, and found upon proof, there was no advantage

tage in ſerving God, and no Man came by the worſe in deſpiſing him.

It is not the invention of one Age, of this laſt Age, as if it might pride it ſelf in finding it out; Scripture hath not thought it againſt its Intereſts to record the ſtrength of the Cauſe, as it was managed of old; in thoſe Elder days of *Job*, in the laſt days of the Old Teſtament, in the time of the Prophet *Malachi*: But over-runs it with a Flood of Truth and Eloquence, even as God does, as he pleaſes, with a Deluge of Wrath.

Yet preſent Impunity, and the ſeeming confuſion of Providence in the proſperity of the ungodly, and the afflicted State of good Men, hath been always a ſtumbling Block to ſudden and ſhort conſideration: *Job* ſignificantly calls it, *Gods ſhining on the Councel of the Wicked*; as if it gave it a Luſtre, and Countenance: Even good Men, till they went into the *Sanctuary of God*, and looked to the end of things, have found it a *Scandal*. The *Pſalmiſt* acknowledges, *His Feet were almoſt gone, and his Feet well nigh ſlipped*, when he *ſaw the Proſperity of the Wicked*, and *Waters of a full Cup of affliction, wrung out to the Godly*: Yet upon full diſcuſſion of the caſe, he confeſſes it his Folly, and Ignorance: So Fooliſh was I, and Ignorant, I was as a Beaſt before thee. *The wiſe King* obſerved *the Hearts of the Sons of Men, fully ſet them in to do Evil, becauſe Sentence on an Evil Work was not ſpeedily Executed*. God by his Patience ſuſtaining, and making wicked Men ſtand, even when they deny him, is the occaſion of their more dreadful fall; for their *Foot will ſlide in due time* to their Eternal Ruine; how ſlack ſoever God is miſdeemed, he will be a *ſwift Witneſs* of his own Being and Truth, and the Avenger of his own Glory,

Job. 10. 3.

Pſal. 73. 2.

Ver. 22.

Eccleſ. 8. 11.

Exod. 9. 16.

Now, ſo far as any Man hath, either in ſecret Suſpicions, or in the ſilent Murmurs of his Soul, ſaid, *There is no God*, or vanquiſhed the prevailing Awes of God, ſo that

that Conſcience hath been *emboldened* or *edified*, or ſo much as ſilenced, or dumb, and mute in the Commiſſion of Sin, or neglect of Duty upon theſe appearances, (and who can ſay herein, *I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from this Tranſgreſſion?*) ſo far hath he been Scandaliſed and indanger'd to his Ruine.

This is the firſt great Pillar of Truth, and the primary Scandal is placed here; That Men think there is no reaſon, God ſhould have ſo much Love, Fear, Honour, Obedience, ſo much Worſhip and Service. And the Second is like to it.

2. Even the Faith *of Jeſus Chriſt, the Saviour of the World*, is like to that firſt great Principle, and equal to it; both becauſe the whole Riches and Treaſure of all Religion is depoſited and concentered in it, ſo that he *hath not the Father*, nor the *Knowledge of the only true God*, nor the *Eternal Life*, proceeding from it, who hath not the Son, who hath not the *Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, whom God hath ſent*. Even as Chriſt is the *brightneſs* of the *Fathers Glory*, and the *expreſs Image of his Perſon*, ſo is the knowledge of Chriſt the expreſs Image of the Knowledge of God, and the brightneſs of it: wherever it is revealed, if it be not believed in, the *God of the World hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, leaſt they ſhould ſee the light of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhining to them.* John 17. 3. 2 Cor. 4. 6. 2 Cor. 4. 4.

Eſpecially, and more particularly, that great Attribute of Divine Mercy, and Pardoning Grace, is illuſtrated, and breaks out with brighter and warmer Beams, in this *Son of his Love, the Lamb of God who takes away the Sins of the World*, by the Sacrifice of himſelf: His is the *only Name given under the whole Heaven, to the Children of Men, whereby they can be ſaved.* Acts 4. 12.

This

This indeed was the *Scandal* of the *Jews*, who assumed to themselves, as the only Masters of the true Religion in the World; and *foolishness to the* Greeks, who took upon them as the like Masters of Reason; but this *corner Stone* of Truth was *laid so sure*, and of so *tryed* an excellency, that all that reject and spurn at it, *stumble* and *fall*, *are snared* and *broken*. They are false Notions of God and Truth, that will not be reconciled to it, and while even the *Builders* refuse it, it will yet rise to be the *Head of the Corner*.

Isa. 28. 16.

1 Pet. 2. 6.

Ver. 7.

It hath now surmounted (before any Impartial Judges) all other Names of Religion in the whole World; so that to strike at it, where it is known and received, argues a disaffection and being Scandalised at Religion it self, and is become the same with denying *God*, *Providence*, and *Eternal Judgment*: Corrupted Reason, and *Lucian*-Wit aims at Religion in its very Essence, when it pretends to dash upon that; and if, when it seem'd to encounter with Gods own Administration by *Moses*, there was yet such a presence of God with it, that it would *be more tolerable for* Sodam *and* Gomorrah, *in the day of Judgment*, than for those that refused it, as the *Lord* in several places testifies, how much greater will the Condemnation be now, when it hath so perfectly antiquated all that pretension against it, and worn out the Prejudices of *Elder Paganisme*? And yet so far as the *Foolishness* of *God*, (as the *Apostle* styles it) does not appear to us *wiser than Men*, and the *weakness of God stronger than Men*, we are ready to be *Scandalised* at the Doctrine of *a Crucified Saviour*. And it seems the easiest place for the Attacks of Atheism, Irreligion, and Prophaneness, who yet at last will find themselves in a Gin, or Trap, when they thought they had gained Ground, and made entrance, and shattered to pieces, when they believed a Conquest: *For God taketh the wise in their own Craftiness, and he knoweth the wisest thoughts of Men, that they*

Mat. 10, 15. &c.

1 Cor. 1. 25.

1 Cor. 3. 19, 20.

they are vain: Every Degree of *Apoſtacy from Chriſt, is departing from the Living God.* Tranſactions in Prayer, or Publick Diſcourſes of Religion, are ſo much the more Divine, as they ſend forth the *ſweet ſavour of his Name*, which is as an *Oyntment poured out. The Apoſtle deſired to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified:* It is the ὑπεροχὴ, the Top and Tranſcendency of Knowledge. *Apoſtolick Epiſtles*, full of Chriſt, and *the Truth as it is in Jeſus*, are the beſt Patterns for Sermons, much exceeding the Rationaliſm or Moraliſm of the wiſeſt *Philoſophy*: It is a Degree of Scandal firſt taken, and then given, to ſpeak little of him. All Preaching is not giving the *ſavour of his Knowledge*; *and if it have not Life to the Soul, it is deadly*, a *Symptom* to *Death.* The very diverting, though to other Parts of Sacred Scripture, ſpeaks Men *offended in him*, when they do not find him, and expreſs him, the *Alpha and Omega* in all, the *Bright Morning Star*, the *Amen.* And though a Battology, a vain Repetition in naming him, is blamable; yet it is more blame to conceal him, even in the beſt Diſcourſes of his Religion. The Rays of Religion are paler, more weak, and chill, as they fall fartheſt off from him: *He is the Sun of Righteouſneſs, with healing in his wings*; and, *Bleſſed is he* in theſe days, even in theſe days, *whoever is not offended in him.*

Heb. 3. 12.

1 Cor. 2. 2. Phil. 3. 8.

1 Cor. 2. ult.

3. The Spirituality, Purity, Cleanneſs, and Chaſteneſs of the Worſhip of God, dictated by the cleareſt and ſincereſt Light of Natural Conſcience, approved by Divine Revelation, or founded, inſtituted, and directed by that undoubted *Heavenly Oracle*, is the next great Pillar of Truth, upon which the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mens Souls, is ſetled: But againſt this, ſenſual and defiled Imagination hath in all Ages raiſed Scandal, and ſo befool'd Reaſon, that it hath caſt down many wounded; yea, many ſtrong Men in their Intellectual Endowments, and Reputation for Wiſdom, have been enſnar'd and ruin'd by it.

It hath been the Renown therefore of thoſe Princes in *Sacred Story*, that have had the Religious Magnanimity to reſiſt the Charmes of this Sorcereſs, and kept Divine Worſhip uncorrupted; in whoſe Glory, ſo much as the *High Places* was a dark Shade, and ecclips'd them, though it had fair Pretence. Idolatry and Superſtition have been moſt evidently branded in Scripture, for the moſt wretched State of being *ſcandaliz'd*; and Idols, for the moſt abhorr'd *Scandals*. This was the *Snare of Gideon and his Houſe*; and yet, as Interpreters give us, in a Matter as innocent at firſt, as laying up the Ephod he had inquir'd at in his Danger, as a Monument of Gratitude for his Victory; that was after turn'd thus into a *Scandal*, *Judges* 8. 27. This was the *Scandal Balaam taught Balak to caſt before the Children of Iſrael*. Theſe were the *Wiles*, the Gins, and Traps, in which the *Midianites*, *Numb.* 25. 17, 18. inclos'd, cramp'd, and *vex'd them*; firſt, with the Guilt riſing up in the Face of Conſcience, and then with the miſerable Conſequence of the ſudden Wrath of God revealed from Heaven againſt them. This was the *Stumbling-block of Iniquity* the wicked Man in *Ezekiel puts before his Face*, even *the Idols he had upon his Heart*. Theſe were the *ſtumbling-blocks*, *with the wicked*, God would *cut off*, and *remove*, in the Prophet *Zephaniah*. This was one principal Point of *Scandal* the *Apoſtle* diſcourſes of to the *Corinthians*, in the Caſe of Eating things *offered unto Idols*; and that the *Holy Spirit* in the *New Teſtament* ſo eminently remarques for *Balaam's Doctrine of Scandal*. The great *Abomination*, and *Lie*, that *deceives the World*, in the Book of the *Revelation*, is the deteſtable *Antichriſtian Idolatry*, the *notorious Scandal* of the *Chriſtian World*, both within it ſelf, and before the *Jews*, *Turks*, and even *Pagans*, who ſee their own Brutiſhneſs acted under that excellent Name.

1 *Cor.* 8. & 10.

Rev. 2. 14.

This is ſo great a Point, that God hath departed from the Brevity of that *Majeſtick Law* in the *Second Commandment*, for

for the guarding his Worſhip, as with a *Flaming Sword*, every way, becauſe in a Caſe wherein Humane Nature is ſo prone to fall. Whether therefore it be the dividing the Divine Honour to any other, though under the Name of Reverence to him, as the Original, or Supreme; or whether it be the carving a Worſhip for God, he does not preſcribe for himſelf; whatever be the Decency, or Expediency to help the Devotion, whether of the Learned, or Unlearned; it becomes Scandal, and a Snare to thoſe that are ſo impos'd upon.

And ſeeing (though the weakneſs of Paſſion be far off from God) he owns himſelf *jealous*, we have reaſon to miſtruſt every thing, when he is ſo; ſeeing not only foul Debauches, but even what is moſt innocent in all other Caſes, is ſuſpected in that.

Hezekiah in the ſenſe of this broke in pieces ſo venerable a Relique as the *Brazen Serpent*, not only a Ceremony of Miraculous Cure, but a Type of *Chriſt*; and degraded it into a meer piece of Braſs, when he ſaw the *Iſraelites ſcandaliſing at it*, and tempted by it to impure Glances. When *our Saviour* perceived ſo clean and harmleſs an Uſage, as Waſhing before Meat, creeping into a piece of Religion, how ſeverely he diſown'd it! and was careleſs of the cauſeleſs *ſcandaliſing* of the *Phariſees*, by his Doctrine concerning it, becauſe he knew there was True and Real *Scandal* in that Rite, ſo abus'd. And when all is ſaid that can be ſaid, *the Heavenly Pattern* is that, in Divine Worſhip, and that only, of which it can be ſaid, That nothing in it can ſcandaliſe, that is, juſtly ſcandaliſe; except we think *God's Jealouſie* was a *Jewiſh* Style, wholly now out of date.

2 *Kings* 18. 4.

Mat. 15. 1.

And yet how hath this *Scandal*, this *Stone of Stumbling*, this *Gin*, and *Snare*, always lain in the way of Humane Imagination, and prevail'd upon it.

As if God, living in the Retirement of a Spiritual Nature, did not underſtand how himſelf was to be addreſs'd

by Men, nor knew the Points of Honour due to his own Glorious Nature, as is moſt Faſhionable and Modiſh in the World; Men take upon them to diſtinguiſh things better by the Breeding they have had in this Earthly Country: they think God ſo much a Stranger, as not to know how to appoint for himſelf, when Men have to do with him; as if what might be well accepted in Heaven, would not yet be current upon Earth. Here Images, Pictures, Elevations, Adorations of the Hoſt, with innumerable Rites and Ceremonies, are neceſſary to beget Devotion due to God the Saviour they will ſerve: Here they that can beſt judge what is moſt Stately, have determin'd, God muſt not make himſelf ſo cheap, as immediately to receive Prayers and Supplications, or by his Son only, as the Mediatour: Angels and Saints muſt intercede, and then who can deny them their ſhare of Honour? Religion will be neglected and deſpiſed, if it have not Sets-off beſides it ſelf, and the neceſſary Decency of Humane Actions: There muſt be ſomething unuſual to dreſs it up, and amuſe. But all this is no more than the Greens and Flouriſhes laid over a Trap, to hide it, and invite the unwary Paſſenger.

God, that underſtands himſelf ſo perfectly, as to know what will pleaſe him, underſtands all Men too, and needs not that any ſhould tell him of Man; for he knows what is in Man; and he hath pronounced it, *What is higly eſteemed among Men, is abomination in the ſight of God:* He hath ſaid it, *In vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men:* All outward Pomp is but *drawing nigh with Lips*, when the Heart is far off.

Iſa. 15. 9.

To worſhip God, is to give him the Glory of his own Perfections, and not to make him *ſuch a One as our ſelves. God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and Truth; in his Spirituality and Truth,* not in their own Carnality and vain Shew. It is not to Paint, or Pourtray, or Carve a Deity, as the *Heathen*, that *chang'd*

Joh. 4. 24.

the

the Truth of God into a Lie, and *the Glory of the Incorruptible God into the Image of Coruptible Man*, and other baſer Creatures, becauſe they thought it beſt; and yet worſe than that, into Names of greateſt Infamy, and flagitious Turpitudes.

All frivolous Rites repreſent Divinity ſmall and impertinent, to the Great loſs of the Glory due to that *terrible Name, The Lord our God.*

One great End of Worſhip, is the Conforming the Soul to the Divine Nature, by Approaches to, and Exerciſes of the Mind upon it; but if this be miſ-ſhapen, the Soul is made more unlike to *God Bleſſed for ever*, as the ſame Heathen became more licentious by the Pourtraictures they gave their Gods. A trivial Temper of Mind naturally re-ſults from a trivial Worſhip, even as it forms it firſt [illegible] often meeting it there, it daily returns from it con[illegible] and improved.

The Sincere Worſhip, directed to in the Goſpel, is [illegible] *Glaſs in which we behold the Glory of the Lord*, and *are changed into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory*, as *by the Spirit of the Lord.* 2 Cor. 3. ult.

Looſneſs of Life hath been always noted to be the Fruit of a Corrupt Worſhip: It is naturally ſo, and God curſes it to be ſo; *God gave Idolaters up to their Luſts*, and *an Injudicious Mind.*

They that Worſhip him aright, according to his Word, adhere to him, and by regular Conduits *drink Life from the Fountain of Life*, and derive from the River of his Pleaſures; they are *abundantly ſatisfied with the Goodneſs of his Houſe, even of his Holy Temple.* Pſal. 36. 8. and 65. 4.

They that Worſhip God after their own Imaginations, do but drink out of their own broken or defiled Ciſterns, that *hold no Water*; and therefore draw nothing but Wind and Air, or Corruption, *They walk in the Light of their own Sparks, and have only this at Gods hand, to lie down in ſorrow.*

Beſides,

Beſides that, God in juſt diſpleaſure ſends down upon them the Revenges of an abuſed and injur'd Power and Godhead. Now all this expreſſes the Heighth both of the Deception and Miſchief of *Scandal.*

4. The fourth great Principle of Truth, is the abſolute and indiſpenſible Neceſſity of Holineſs, both in Heart and Life, *without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*: Againſt which there lies no ſuch *Scandal*, or cauſe of *Offence*, as inward and inherent Luſt, and inordinate Appetite, which is obſtinately ſet to obtain its Satisfaction, and is no way to be tam'd, but by being cut off, though it be the *Right Hand*, or *Right Foot*, or even *the Right Eye. The Love of God*, and *his Law*, is the beſt Security againſt this *Scandal*, and daily Mortification and Crucifixion of the *Old Man, with its ſinful Luſts and Affections.*

Heb. 12. 24.

Mark 9. 43.

Epheſ. 4. 22.

Pretences from Reaſon, or Doctrines of Religion, there can be none in this Caſe, to thoſe who acknowledge either Chriſtianity, or Morality.

But Men are carried down the violent Stream of ungovern'd Paſſion, and that falls into the wide Sea of general Corruption and Bad Example, which looks moſt like an Authority. There are the Palliations and Excuſes of Sin, which may ſerve in a time of Peace, and Carnal Security; but cannot ſo delude Conſcience, as to be in a ſtrict ſenſe *Scandal.* The continual Practice of Sin *hardens the Heart*, ſears, benumbs, and ſtupifies all inward Senſe, and cancels the Awe of thoſe ingraven Laws and revealed Commands of God, for a time; but cannot either deny their Juſt Power, or challenge them of Unreaſonableneſs. So that, if any where, Men are forc'd to take Refuge at the Atheiſtick denial of Religion it ſelf, or to blind Conſcience with Superſtitious Acts, which ſeem to commute and make ſatisfaction for Sin: Or, if Men are reſolved to blind their Eyes, and obſtruct all Senſe, they may make the Profeſſion of True Religion a Cover to Sin, as they that cry, *Lord, Lord*, and the

Mat. 7. 22.

the *Temple of the Lord are we*; that name the Name of Christ with great oſtentation, and ſo may deceive their own Souls; but to hold out againſt either the Challenges of Divine Truth, or of their own Reflexions, is impoſſible. So that, upon the whole matter, Predominant Luſt from within, and Bad Example from the ſo abounding Iniquity of all ſorts of Men, the Falls of Good Men, the Miſcarriages of Hypocrites and inſincere Profeſſours of Religion, are the greateſt *Scandals* or *Stumbling-blocks* in the Ways of Holineſs, to thoſe that are not inſnared in the afore-named *Scandals*. *Jer.* 7. 4. 2 *Tim.* 2. 19.

But although the neceſſity of Holineſs is above the reach of ſtrict and proper *Scandal*, yet it is the very Center of all *Scandal* in the effect of it; for then a Man is indeed *ſcandaliſed*, when the *Salt* of Divine Truth, when the Spirit of Truth can have no power nor efficacy upon him, becauſe of that *Scandal*, to ſeaſon the Heart, nor govern the Life and Action in the Love, Fear, and Obedience of God and Jeſus Chriſt. But if it be poſſible for any Man to underſtand in his Heart and Life what he does not promiſe by Profeſſion; or if he ſeem to deny any Principle of Truth, and does not underſtand in his Heart and Life the Extent and Force of his Denial, but hath better Principles, that are an Antidote and Counter-poyſon to any Miſtakes in the Doctrine of Religion, he is not *ſcandaliſed* with the great Miſchief of *Scandal*: But that Man is *ſcandaliſed*, that through Falſe Principles, or the denial of True ones, wants their Power and Vertue upon his Affections and Actions: For no Truth is for Notions ſake, but to make truly good the Heart and Practice; the very Confeſſion with the Mouth is to recoil back into the Soul, and make that better, and to move forward, and ingage the Life along with it.

5. It is a grand Pillar of the Truth of Religion, That *we love our Neighbour as our ſelves*; and that *he that loves* 1 *John* 4. 21. *God*,

God, ſhould love his Brother alſo: And there is not, there cannot be any Law of Religion, wherein the Equity, the Love, Favour, and Compaſſion of the Lord our God, and of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, towards Humane Nature, does more evidently recommend it ſelf: It is the Juſtification of the Religion of the Scriptures to be the True Religion: And as the *Love of God to Man, his Philanthropy,* does ſhine out more illuſtriouſly in the Goſpel; ſo does the Law and Doctrine of this *Love of Chriſtians to one another*; and not only *to Chriſtians,* but *to all Men*: And in this, as of greateſt concernment, the Goſpel is ſo abundant, and its Diſcourſes of ſo great weight, that it is made another *Hemiſphere of Religion* to the *Love of God.* The one is *the firſt and great Commandment,* and *the ſecond is like to it:* It is *the Law and the Prophets*; it is *the whole Law.* It is irreconcilable to the Love of God, not to love our Brother: It is ſuch a Degree of Murther, that whoever is guilty of, *cannot have Eternal Life abiding in him.* It is the great Mark *We have paſſed from Death to Life, becauſe we love the Brethren.*

Mat. 31. 38, 39. Rom. 13. 8, 9. 1 Joh. 3. 15. 1 Joh. 3. 14.

So many are the Arguments, and ſo ſtrong the Obligations to this Duty, that they cannot be recounted; all may be ſummed up, in that God is *Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, is born of God, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Now that this Love is fix'd in an Uniformity of Opinions, or points of outward order in the Worſhip of God, is moſt unreaſonable to believe; for beſides the impoſſibility to reconcile all the innocent Varieties that are *in Humane Nature,* though it be *Chriſtian humane Nature,* in their Sentiments and Elections in theſe things; the things themſelves are not of that amount, as to be the proper reſt of this Divine Love; or that if it miſſes theſe Poles, it ſhould therefore ceaſe to be the Axis upon which the Catholick Society of Chriſtians, and Chriſtian unity, turns; for that, in the very Nature of the thing, muſt be ſubſtantial Chriſtianity it ſelf.

And

And this is indeed the *Great Schiſm*, to be divided in Affection from Chriſtians; it is a wonder how it could be otherwiſe underſtood, ſeeing ſmaller differences are frequently by the *Apoſtle* conſidered, and allowed for, without the leaſt allowance for *Chriſtians not loving one another.*

Chriſtianity carries no Gall, even towards utmoſt Strangers, upon the account of its being the true Religion, much leſs towards thoſe that are truly Chriſtians, though not each uniform with one another in all things.

The great *Scandals* againſt this Love are, private Men think it juſtifiable not to love thoſe that have injured them; but this Caſe hath been conſidered, and a forgivneſs of *ſeventy ſeven Injuries in a day*, upon *Acknowledgment* and *Repentance*, been taken care for, that Love may be continued. The forgivneſs of God and Chriſt, is ſet us as an Example, and that it may the more affect us, the odds between our Offences againſt God, and all Treſpaſſes againſt our ſelves, is ſtated as diſproportionate as *ten thouſand Talents* to a *hundred Pence.* *Mat.* 18. 22. *Luke* 17. 4.

But however Men think, they may juſtly not love where there is a difference in Divine matters, in matters of Religion: This is the cauſe of God and Truth, and yet this is generally but the greater *Scandal*; for when the things that Chriſtians differ in are ſmall, and that they agree in great and momentous things, it is evident the Integrity, Honour, and Intereſt of Religion ſhould much more unite, and indear, than little Intereſts divide.

In things that are evidently contrary to Divine Truth, and the Law of God, there is a juſt denial of a χαίρειν, with reſpect to that Evil he travels with, as the *Apoſtle John*, the great Miniſter of Love, teaches us; and a Method for Reformation or Rejection, as *our Saviour*, agreeable to that *Law in Leviticus*, preſcribes us; not to ſmother our hatred or diſguſts in ſilence, and reſerve by concealing the fault, a conſtant cauſe and ſtore for our Anger *Mat.* 18. 15, *&c. Lev.* 9. 17.

or Ill-will, but to bring it to an open procedure, that either our miſapprehenſion may be rectified, or the perſon reformed, and ſo our love either way reſtored; or a juſt reaſon appear, not for our hatred, but for our limitting the extent of our Love: In ſuch a caſe it ought not to be as is due to a *Chriſtian*, but to a *Publicane*, or *Heathen*; who is ſtill the Object of our Love, but not of that kind, that degree of Love adjuſt to Chriſtians; but this muſt be in a caſe clear and evident, not every Diſpute. The Truth of Chriſtian Religion, and the great Deſign of it, is the Salvation and Happineſs of all the Servants of Chriſt, and with an Univerſal Favour to Mankind; and this is preſerved only in Love.

Every thing then that cools and deſtroys Love, under a ſhew of Juſt and Right, is a *Scandal*; becauſe it overthrows Chriſtianity, which is indeed a Religion of Love, and makes a man of great Name, Pretence, Authority in the Church, a *nothing*.

It is a *Scandal*, for it riſes from *Scandal*; it hath the ill effect of *Scandal*, both enſnaring and deſtroying, and it tends to further *Scandal*.

It riſes from *Scandal*; he that does not Love hath ſome Luſt, ſome intereſt of Profit, Dominion, or Pleaſure, that he ſerves under a name of Religion: They that cauſe *Diviſions*, διχοστασίας; *Diviſions* in affection, taking advantage of Diſſents in Opinion, *theſe ſerve their own Bellies*: That Luſt which they cloak with Religion, that baſer Intereſt they cloath and cover with a better name; that Luſt ſo diſguiſed deceives them, and enſlaves them under it ſelf: This moves to further *Scandal*; every one that does not comply with the humour of this Luſt, and ſerve it, he appears as the Irreligious, or the Factious diſorderly Perſon; hereupon he muſt not be received, or continued in the Love due to a *Brother*, a *Chriſtian*; though the caſe be nothing at all to true Chriſtianity. *Our Saviour*,

Rom. 16, 17.

viour, as aware of this, in his ſo ſevere caution of not *Scandaliſing little ones*, immediatly ſubjoins thoſe dreadful Precepts of cutting off the Right Hand, &c. that *Scandaliſe* our ſelves, as implying, they are the great cauſes of our *Scandaliſing* others. This ſtill moves on to further *Scandal*; *Scandal* to Strangers, who thereupon look upon Religion as Auſtere, Moroſe, and Cruel, and ſo are diſcouraged from coming in to it: *Scandal* to thoſe, whom our Saviour calls *the little ones* in Chriſtianity, whom it may be he ſo calls, not that they are always ſo in themſelves (when yet deſpiſed) but becauſe they may be only ſo in the Eyes of thoſe that *deſpiſe them*, and think not the honour and regard owing to Chriſtians due to them; or becauſe, take the meaneſt in Chriſtianity, or thoſe we think, or are indeed in moſt danger to be loſt, our Saviour in a *Scheme*, in *a Figure* of *little ones*, would repreſent, they ought to be the moſt cautiouſly and tenderly treated. *Marc.* 9. 43.

Laſtly, They themſelves become *Scandaliſed* too often to much higher degrees of *Scandal* hereby, even againſt thoſe things that carry the trueſt, and moſt genuine Spirit of Chriſtianity, becauſe they would go as far off as they can, and be moſt unlike thoſe from whom they diſſent in ſome things; that neither their Praying, their Preaching, their Phraſe and manner of ſpeaking muſt be accepted by them, till they even deſert the Examples of the very Scripture it ſelf in thoſe things; and come too near Burleſquing the Sacred guiſe of them, or at leaſt, what is ſo nearly united, that the reproach that falls upon the one falls upon the other alſo; and all that they may be ſure to ſtand far enough off from the adverſe purity of what they have eſpouſed; whoſe Opinions while they ſeem to ſtrike, the things moſt agreeable to Scripture, are the Sufferers too often. But he that *loves his Brother*, has no *occaſion* of this ſort of *ſtumbling* (which is not far from the *Apoſtles* meaning) becauſe as his Soul is rightly compos'd, and not Clou- 1 *John* 2. 10, 11.

ded with dark and black paſſion, ſo he hath no Temptation to diſlike any thing in true Chriſtianity, out of *Hatred to his Brother* who profeſſes it, but an additional Obligation to keep the Truth entire, out of *Love to his Brother* who is united in it with himſelf; and therefore it is ſaid, hereby we know we love the Children of God, when we love God, and keep his Commandments; when our love to them ingages us the more cloſe, in a Religious Union with them. He that *hates his Brother*, is ready to fall out with every thing that he is for, and knows not at what he ſtumbles, whether it be truly of God and Chriſt, or not, and ſo is no juſt occaſion of *ſtumbling*, though he *ſtumble* at it.

1 John. 5. v. 2.

6. The Government and Authority God hath veſted in Conſcience to underſtand with God for it ſelf, and the Soul; and to guide it ſelf according to his Command, who is its only Father, and it ought to have none *upon Earth*, beſide him; even as *Chriſt* is its *one Maſter*, is a Grand Principle of True Religion.

And this is of ſo great concernment, that though the thing be good a Man does, yet if he does it not upon a Judgement, a Senſe, a Dictate of Conſcience; or if that he refuſes be truly Evil, yet if it be not rejected in the ſame manner, upon the ſame Motives, neither the one nor the other ariſes to a Religious action, or is accepted with God, as done in *his Fear*, but is *a vain honour* of him.

Now to the diſcharge of Conſcience, in this its ſo high Office and Truſt it owes to it ſelf and the Soul, that it be richly and abundantly furniſhed with the knowledge of the Divine Will, and the *Word of God dwelling* in it; that ſeeing it is both the *Scribe* and *Doctor*, or, if I may ſo ſpeak, the *Biſhop* of the Soul within it ſelf, it be as the *good Houſeholder*, that *brings forth out of his Treaſury things new and old*, that it attend to all Means of Inſtruction for the *Kingdom of Heaven*, entertain all Wiſdom,

liſt

lift up its voice for it; ſeek it as Silver, and ſearch for it as for hid Treaſure.

And that its influence may be powerful and effective upon the Soul, to all Holy and Heavenly Obedience, there muſt be a juſt preſervation of its Authority, and good Conduct, that ſo it may promote the Soul into all goodneſs, having gained a high Reputation and Honour, by the ſucceſs it hath had already, and the comfort and good expectation it raiſes within the Soul, upon its happy Government: For the *upright man*, from this vigor of Conſcience, *holds on his way*, and grows *ſtronger and ſtronger*; and *the way of the Juſt* becomes *as the ſhining Light, that ſhines more and more to the perfect day.* Job. 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18.

And therefore one of the principal *Scandals* Scripture remarques upon, is this, When Conſcience, upon any Solli-citation, upon any Inſinuation, or Uſurpation upon it, betrays this Truſt, and ſurrenders it ſelf to any other Dictate or Authority, but that which is Divine; and that ſhining within it ſelf, and ſo aſſuring it by its Rationality, Goodneſs, Purity, Majeſty, that it is from God: To take any thing upon truſt from Men, that it does not try, and examine, or to let go any thing it hath ſo tryed and examined, and found good, upon any pretence whatever, is indeed to be *Scandaliſed*; that pretence, that does ſo aſſume over it, and prevail with it againſt it ſelf, Scandaliſes it.

For the charge of repreſenting to the Soul, the Authority of the Divine Laws, is committed to the Conſcience; the ſupream Moderation is in God, and the Divine Law; yet it is tranſmitted into the Soul, it enters thither through the Dictates of Conſcience; whatever then ſo impoſes on Conſcience, as that it recedes from its Government, Scandaliſes it; for the Government of God is loſt alſo thereby.

And

And though Conſcience cannot juſtifie a man in any error, nor ought to poſſeſs a Man with unneceſſary ſcruples; yet ſtill the main Government of Conſcience deriving it ſelf from God, and the true underſtanding of his Will, is by no means to be ſhaken.

For Man, as a Rational Creature, as a Creature of Religion, cannot obey God, but by the Mediation of Conſcience. He muſt know, and judge within himſelf, what is the Divine Law, and obey it. If he does in Conformity to that Will, and does not know it, it is not true Obedience, becauſe it is not Religious; it is not reaſonable, or rationally Religious Obedience.

The Obedience of God is ſeated in the Judgment, in the Conſcience; if theſe Reins are ſlack and looſe, if this Golden Bridle be neglected, Men know not whither they may run, upon what they may be driven, and never diſcover the danger. A man cannot diſtinguiſh what is from God, from what is not; if this guſt of the Soul be not quick, vigorouſly exerciſed, and left free.

Conſcience may be inſtructed, adviſed, perſwaded, yea, even menaced and terrified by the Applications of the Word of God to it; nay, it may be over-ruled by Lawful Authority, wherein it turns Apoſtate, or Renegade to Natural Religion; yet it can never be Lawfully depos'd, or put out of Authority: The Myſtery of Faith, the Rule of Obedience, the Conſolation and Vigor of the Soul, are all preſerved in a *pure Conſcience*, and *Shipwracked* together with it.

Now becauſe Conſcience is placed by God in this great Truſt and Dignity; it becomes, and it muſt needs become ſo great a matter of *Scandal*, as the *Apoſtle* diſcourſes: when Conſcience not duly regarding its own light, and inward Senſe ſurrenders it ſelf to a forreign Rule; ſteers it ſelf by a compaſs out of it ſelf; ſays, another ſhall be wiſe and ſee, and Dictate for it; and ſo gives up it ſelf in an implicite Faith, and blind Obedience. Here

Here is *Scandal* in its Deluſive, Deceptive Power; a Man thinks it modeſt, cautious, a point of Honour and Subjection to thoſe that are above him, to be carried by an Authority out of himſelf: Conſcience hereupon deſerts its own Principles, and its own place in directing according to them: Upon this it falls into all the miſerable conſequences, the miſchief of *Scandal*. Conſcience is *wounded*, *grieved*, *weakned*, and lies *proſtrate*; and without Repentance, the *work of God* in the Natural, or new Creation, is *deſtroyed*, and even the Man for whom *Chriſt dyed* periſhes.

God hath concredited the *Keys* of *Knowledge* and *Juriſdiction* within the Soul to Conſcience alone; and I cannot find that it can be at all excuſed in reſigning them into any Hand, but his that gave them; no not to an *Angel from Heaven*.

The Miniſters of Religion, and Magiſtrates in their place, have theſe *Keys*, as they are Adminiſtred without a Man, to offer and preſs upon him all conſiderations of his Duty.

But every Man muſt ſee with his own Eyes, and not anothers for him, he muſt be enlightned by Beams and Rayes that ſhine within his own Soul: He hath a private double Lock upon himſelf, and none may *open* and *ſhut* but Conſcience, in and with God: whoever elſe does, becomes a *Father*, and a *Maſter upon Earth* to him, in the place of God and Chriſt.

Upon this account the Apoſtle lays down theſe three great Poſitions. *Rom.* 14. 22, 23.

1. That *whatever is not of Faith*, of a free and full perſwaſion of Conſcience, *is Sin*. For though the Natures of things cannot be changed in themſelves; yet as we are converſant in them, it is an undoubted Rule, *Bonum oritur ex integris cauſis*. Every thing conſpires to, and concerts Good; but Evil being a declenſion and fall from Good, every degree of fall or aberration from Good, is Evil; and this

this Plenipotence of Conſcience, committed to it by God, is a prime neceſſary in every good thing, and the want of it greatly evil; though it hath not an Omnipotence of changing Nature it ſelf.

2. From hence it follows, he that *does*, and doubts in what he *does*, is *condemned* in his *doing* (whatever the thing be in it ſelf) becauſe to him it is ſo far Evil, that he does it againſt that Domeſtick Authority of Conſcience.

3. He is a *happy Man*, that (eſpecially having fallen into doubt) in doubtful things is come to ſo good a Reſolution, *as not to condemn himſelf* in that wherein *he allows himſelf*. He that hath a good aſſurance riſing, neither from Ignorance nor Careleſneſs, is a *happy Man*; by way of Eminency. It is a rare and extraordinary *happineſs*, and he that hath not, but is perplexed with Doubt, ought not to be as a *Lamp deſpiſed*; he deſerves great tenderneſs and compaſſion: As I ſhall more fully have occaſion to obſerve under the Second Head; *viz. Scandal* about *Indifferent things*; to which I now proceed.

And I am here to undertake a particular and diſtinct conſideration of *Scandal*; as it hath a moſt peculiar intereſt in thoſe ſo famous Debates of the Apoſtle, concerning *indifferent things*, *Rom.* 14. 1 *Cor.* 8. & 10. when they can any way be ſuppos'd to relate to God in the Notions of Religion, or have a preſence, how circumſtantial ſoever, in Divine Worſhip.

But before I enter upon this undertaking, I muſt remove two Prejudices.

1. It muſt be acknowledged, *Scandal* in theſe caſes hath been indeed made Trivial, by ſome Mens injudicious Zeal, and ignorant dealing with the *Apoſtles* Senſe herein; who having a crude Conception of *Scandal*, from what he hath ſpoken of it, as a moſt formidable Evil, both in him that gives it, or takes it, have therefore called every thing

thing *Scandal* that displeases them, and mean nothing by being *ſcandaliſed*, but that they have greatly diſliked ſuch or ſuch things, without any other hazard of falling into ſin, than what is to be feared from their indiſcreet anger, and too often over-paſſionate inflammation; whence hath riſen this *Scandal*, dangerous enough, That many are ready to believe, there is no ſuch thing as *Scandal* in *Indifferent Things*; except what *unknowing Zeal* in a ferment creates; or at leaſt have not taken into their thoughts this kind of true *Scripture Scandal*, or entertained a juſt fear of running into it, or enſnaring others in it.

But it will be evident to any one that duly weighs, that the *Apoſtle* proceeds upon much deeper and more grave Conſiderations.

2. On the other ſide, the Fear of *Scandal* or *ſcandaliſing* hath been blown off by ſome, upon this miſtake, That Men can be in no danger to be *ſcandaliſed*, who keep far enough from being drawn by Example into any thing they diſlike, and are ſufficiently angry at The Obſtinacy of ſuch, they think, is a ſufficient Bar to them againſt *Scandal*, and againſt any ones being guilty, as an Author of *Scandal* to them, how hardly ſoever they preſs upon them; while they profeſs ſo loudly their Diſſent, they muſt not ſo much as name *Scandal*, without the imputation of groſs Ignorance.

But it is to be juſtly apprehended, a man may be *He, by whom Scandal comes*, though it find no place in him againſt whom it comes; as hath been already obſerved.

And further, Though the *Apoſtle* hath in theſe two Inſtances fixed chiefly upon that ſort of *Scandal*, within which men are drawn by following Example againſt their inward Sentiments; yet, by a parity of Reaſon, *Scandal* is to be ſuſpected to have much larger compaſs, even in *things of Indifferency*, and lying farther off from mens doubtful complying in what they have Example or Command for,

than that ſuch complyance ſhould be the only meaſure of *Scandal* therein.

And even in thoſe that do comply with freer minds, there are more ſecret Paths and Tracks wherein *Scandals* are laid, than they generally and openly make complaint of, and that not only in regard of inward Doubts, but upon other accounts alſo.

I ſhall therefore lay down theſe two Preparatories, to make theſe Diſcourſes of the *Apoſtle* more concerning to us.

1. That we have great Reaſon to be aſſured, they have their Foundation in the Denunciations of *Woe* by *our Saviour* upon *the World* becauſe of *Scandal*; upon him by whom *Scandal comes*, by way of tranſcendency; and his Admonition to all, that *Scandals muſt needs come*: For the ſame *Divine Spirit of Truth* deſcended from the *Maſter* upon the *Miniſter*, and fram'd like Apprehenſions in him, when he ſpake afterward of the ſame point. Nay we have Reaſon to believe the latter Diſcourſe looks back upon the former, becauſe it was undoubtedly well known to Chriſtians then, and much more to the Apoſtle; who, beſides that he had *immediate Revelations*, moſt probably from the Lord, even of thoſe things that were written by the *Evangeliſts*, gives proof he had a very peculiar care to know all He had ſpoken, and a ſingular reſpect to it; for he expreſly quotes our Saviour in thoſe immediate Revelations, as in the Caſe of the Lords Supper, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. in what was written in the Evangeliſts, as in the Caſe of Divorce, 1 *Cor.* 7. 10.

And laſtly, in what he had attained, as well teſtified, though not recorded, as in that *Acts* 20. 35. *Remembring the words of the Lord Jeſus, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

It is not therefore reaſonable to ſuppoſe, in ſuch Diſcourſes of *Scandal* as theſe, he neglected ſo ſolemn a one

as

as *our Lords* upon it. The *Little ones* in the Evangeliſt, and the *Weak Brethren* in the Apoſtle; the *Wo* in the one, and the *Conſcience* in the other; *grieved, wounded, weak* Chriſtians, *ſtumbling, falling, periſhing*, and being *deſtroy'd*, are of near affinity in their ſenſe: And thoſe even Abjurations of Occaſions of *Scandal*, *It is good neither to eat Fleſh, nor drink Wine, nor any thing whereby thy Brother ſtumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak: If Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Fleſh while the World ſtandeth, leſt I make my Brother to offend, or ſcandaliſe my Brother:* Theſe ſo ſolemn Renunciations of Scandal are not far off from *our Saviours Wo upon him by whom Scandal cometh:* and that great *Aphoriſm*, *Happy is he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth*, is grounded upon that; *Scandals muſt needs come*, they force an Entry at every the leaſt Advantage; and therefore, *Happy is he* that can preclude them.

Rom. 14. 21. 1 Cor. 8. 13. Rom. 14. 22.

2. That ſeeing the Inſtances of *Scandal* the *Apoſtle* debates upon, *viz.* the *Jewiſh diſtinction of Meats*, and *Eating things offered to Idols*, were of a narrow and particular Nature, and of a daily decreaſing Occurrence; the *Apoſtles* ſo laborious and induſtrious handling them being preſerv'd in Sacred Records, and tranſmitted down to after Ages, argues, he, or rather the *Holy Spirit* by him, deſigned to remonſtrate to the lateſt Poſterity of Chriſtians, the great Play, Scope, and Force of *Scandal* in theſe Indifferencies, and in all Caſes wherein they may fall out to be *Scandals* (though not after the Similitude of theſe) the danger of *ſcandaliſing*, or being *ſcandaliſed*.

Having thus far premis'd, I come now cloſe up to theſe *Apoſtolick* Debates themſelves; of which I ſhall make ſuch a Platform, with all poſſible brevity and conciſeneſs, as may comprehend the whole Doctrine of the Apoſtle upon theſe two Caſes, and then balance with it the whole Nature of

Indifferents, as they come into such an Account of Religion as I have before suppos'd.

The Platform I lay down in these Parts of it, all drawn out of these Debates.

1. The stating of the Nature of *Indifferents* in relation to God.
2. The way how *Scandal* invades *Indifferent things*, when come into such a Relation.
3. The several ways of *Scandal* playing it self upon *Indifferents*.
4. The great Considerations against pressing Indifferent things, when they are come into *Scandal*, so much as by Example.
5. The Answer of the several Objections that may be used to disparallel *Indifferents* (because of other Circumstances) with these *Indifferents*.

I begin with the first, the stating the Nature of *Indifferents* with relation to God, in these four Characters of them.

1. They are things in themselves Lawful, Innocent, and in their Use, as of themselves, no way displeasing to God. So the *Apostle* pronounces, with great boldness and earnestness, of *Meats* that were forbidden under the *Law of Moses*: *I am* (saith he) in respect to them, perswaded by the *Lord Jesus*, *there is nothing unclean of it self, but all things are pure*.

In the Case of *Things offered to Idols*, he declares, *All things* (viz. of that kind) *are lawful*, that is, with regard to the things themselves, if they are used aright, if they are taken by the right Handle.

Although *Meats* have been *offered to Idols*, yet there is no such thing as an *Infinite Evil*, that can taint *what God hath made good*. *There is one God, the Father, of whom all things are* originally, *and we in him, and for him*; and *in* or

1 Cor. 8. 6.

for

for no *Idol* or *Demon*: *There is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator, by whom*, in a reconciled and attoned State, *after the great Corruption and Curse by Sin, are all things, and we by him*, and by no *Demon-Mediator* or *Intercessor*. This Right, Title, Claim, and Propriety of *God*, and *Christ*, no *Demon* can expulse. God and Christ *so fill all things*, that an *Idol* can be but a *Nothing*.

2. These *Indifferents*, or the Use of them, cannot *commend us to God*, as of themselves: we are *not the better if we eat, or the worse if we eat not*; *Meat commendeth us not to God*.

3. There may yet be so Religious and Advantageous Use of them, as that they may, by the observation of all due Circumstances, and the elevation of them to the best and worthiest Ends, be *Occasions* (I say, *Occasions* onely) of Religious Service, and Glory to God, and that on either side; which shews their Indifferency; for one side may be made an occasion of Religious Action, as well as the other; and so neither side obliges us more than other: *He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, and giveth God thanks*; *He that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God thanks*. *He that eateth Meat offered to Idols*, in *Gods Right*, and not in *the Right of the Demon*, is a Partaker by *Grace*, or Divine Bounty, through Christ. For, the Meat is Gods, and his Provision; and the *Idol*, to him that understands, hath nothing to do with it; and therefore he *giveth God thanks*, and not *the Idol*. It is in relation to these things, the Apostle commands, *Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do*, (that is, or *not eat*, or *not drink*) *do all to the Glory of God*.

4. They may be used amiss both ways. In some Circumstances, *It is good not to eat Flesh, or drink Wine, even while the World standeth*. They may in some Circumstances *be inexpedients* and *not edifie*; that is, by a diminutive way of speaking, run counter to the Ends of *Edification*, and

and *Scandalise* others. They that have knowledge concerning their true nature, and the best use of them, may yet so use them, as *to sin against the Brethren*, and *wound their righteous Conscience*, and so *sin against Christ*. But they that Eat *without knowledge*, Eat so as *to Eat with Scandal* to *doubt*, and *be damned in their Eating*.

On the the other side, they which use them not, that *Eat not*, that *will not Eat*, may so not Eat, as to turn them into another sort of *Scandal*, while they grow superstitiously affraid to *touch*, *taste*, or *handle*; and therefore he that useth *Indefferent things* aright, only makes use of that side of them he chooses, as an occasion or acting to the *Glory of God*, as he desires to do in all he does, without placing any weight on either side of the things themselves.

The Christian *fully perswaded in his own mind to eat eateth, and giveth God thanks*; but knows *meat commends him not to God*, makes it no matter of Religion *to eat*, and so in ease of *Scandal* forbears it. The Christian that *eateth not*, maketh use of the liberty he hath, as in *an indifferent thing*, *not to eat* either *meats unclean* according to *Moses*, or things *offered to Idols*; without laying any stress of Religion upon his abstinence in either, but only the assurance he is not the worse in not eating, and thereby avoiding the inconvenience of either doubting in himself, or *scandalising* any other: In the same manner he maketh use of his liberty in *distinguishing* a *Day*, upon any good occasion, that was distinguished under *the Law*, without *observing of Days* as a point of Religion, but only places a Religious Action on that *Day*, according to the liberty he hath in an *indifferent thing*: And so avoids the Doubt in himself of not observing what is Commanded, and the *scandal* to any other.

But now he that *not eating* slips unawares into a surmise of Evil in the things themselves, and that he does a great

act

act of Religion in *not eating*, and ſo dares not *touch*, *taſte*, *handle*; or he that would gain, as he thinks, upon God by *obſerving Days*, he falls into the *Scandal* of making his Weakneſs a part of his Religion; even as he that for the vaunt of his liberty eats licentiouſly, and careleſly of others; or thinks in *eating* he does God ſervice: or in *eating* ſlides into his old awes or pangs of Devotion to the *Idol*, and *eats* in his Right, to his Honour, and ſo is defiled: or laſtly, *eats* when he is in doubt of the lawfulneſs, upon the credit of Example, which is the proper *Scandal* the Apoſtle aims at.

Now from all theſe Characters it is moſt evident,

1. *Indifferent Things* are far below the Scale of Divine Inſtitutions, though theſe Inſtitutions are but Poſitive, and not of Eternal Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs.

All the Appointments of God and Chriſt are lifted up into that ſtate the Divine Appointment deſigns them to; and ſhall, if uſed according to thoſe Appointments, be made efficacious to thoſe Ends for which they are appointed, according to the effectual working of that Power and Grace from which they received their Original: So that they do *make us better*, they do *commend us to God*, if we obſerve the Will and Law of God concerning them; and *we are the worſe* in the ſinful neglect of them, according to the degree of neglect.

2. They are not of the Scale of thoſe things, wherein that Order, of which God, by the very laws of Rational Nature is the Author, ſtands; and not of *Confuſion*; ſo that though this Order runs, or ought to run along, and conduct all Humane Actions, and ſo is not in it ſelf a point of Religion; yet when it is applyed to Religious Services and Actions, doth indeed commend our Religious Actions and Services to God, and the contrary is an Evil.

3. Of

3. Of the same account is that *Euschemonia*, or Decency of Religious Actions, required by God before himself, and before the *Holy Angels*, of which the Apostle discourses; *Every man praying with his Head uncovered, dishonoureth his Head*; every Woman praying so, ought to have a *covering on her Head, because of the Angels*; such a distinction of Sexes being founded in Nature; and in what is beyond Nature, the grave Customs of Ages and Places, carry a great weight of Determination.

4. The most *indifferent Circumstances*, that yet most necessarily attend all serious, and important humane Actions, (and therefore Religious Actions) when once determined by the Prudence, and mature consideration of those that have greatest right to determine therein, as Times, Places, and general Order of Publick Worship become (however *indifferent* in themselves) yet above *indifferent* in their Observations, because the undue change of them is not only Levity, but approaches to Frenzy.

And now I have so far settled the Nature of *Indifferents*, that I think no variety of Circumstances can make an alteration in any, more than in those Eternal Laws of the Natures of things. I come therefore to the Second thing in the Platform I have given of the Apostles Discourse, *viz.*

2. To inquire how *Scandal* invades these so innocent *Indifferencies*, when they come into a Relation to Religion.

And the very ground of advantage or its entry, is through this very Relation to Religion. For therein is the very Center of *Scandal*, as a Corruption of the best thing; there is its great Power and Sting, to disorder the state of things betwixt God and Man; and the more any thing comes into that consideration, the more efficacious is *Scandal* upon it, if not warily prevented.

And

And it is therefore the moſt Chriſtian Policie, to leave all things without the *Line of Religion*, or *Religious Worſhip*, that can be ſpared, and are not of neceſſary uſe to it, to cut off all broad *Phylacteries*, on that very account, that Scandal is ſo attempting, and invading, and nothing ſafe from its Aſſaults; even as indefenſible Buildings in a Garriſon are pulled down and ſlighted, leſt the Enemy make advantage of them to cover himſelf. Incumbring Religion with *Indifferents*, more than needs muſt, are but ſo many Shelters for *Scandal*.

Scandal then, in *Indifferent things* pertaining to Religion, is an Occaſion taken upon them, as they ſtand in that Relation, to act, under ſome pretence, contrary to any of the great Principles or Laws of Religion.

Indifferent Things are brought into a Relation to Religion,

1. By ſome Appointment of God, who alone hath Right to do it, exalting Indifferent Things into a Goodneſs above their Nature, or for wiſe Purpoſes depreſſing them below their Nature; which Appointment ceaſing and expiring, they return each of them into their own natural *Indifferency*, and are alike *good* and *clean*; and upon the juſt Level of their firſt Creation, of themſelves are nothing to Religion, eſpecially as it is perfected in Chriſtianity. This was the Caſe the *Apoſtle* treats upon to the *Romans*: There was a Law of God by *Moſes*, diſtinguiſhing *Days* and *Meats*; this Law was out-dated by Chriſt; all things hereupon returned into their original State of equal Goodneſs and Cleanneſs, and were wholly alike, as to any Religious Account of them, to all that underſtood the aboliſhing of that Law, which at that time was but beginning.

2. *Indifferents* are brought into a Relation to Religion, by Mans Idolatrous or Superſtitious Tranſmutation of them out of their Natures, either above or below themſelves; which being greatly abominable to God, as injuri-

ous to his ſole Right, and very deſtructive to Mans Soul, debauches theſe Indifferents into great Impurity, to all that with Deſign and Reſolution will underſtand and uſe them ſo changed: To them that are *unbelieving and defiled* is *nothing pure, but even their Mind and Conſcience is defiled.* But being underſtood aright, and according to their Nature, they return to their own Innocency and Purity, that is, the Purity of their Creation, and Diſpoſition by God, (*for to the pure all things are pure*) and to an Indifferency every way, in relation to Religion.

Tit. 1, 15.

This was the Caſe the *Apoſtle* reaſons upon to the *Corinths.*

The Meats offered to Idols, the Idols Temple, were moſt impure to the *Idolaters,* and Superſtitions:

Yet the *Idol* could not expulſe God's Right, nor change the Nature of his Creation.

This was moſt amply declared in the Goſpel-ſtate of Things.

They that underſtood this, had a moſt Lawful and Free Uſe of thoſe very *Places,* and *Meats,* that were ſo polluted by the Gentiles: So that whether *they eat, or not eat,* it was all alike, in the things themſelves, upon any Religious account.

3. *Indifferent Things* may be made Appurtenances to Religion, without being extravaſated from their own Nature of *Indifferency,* by being put by the Authority of Eccleſiaſtick, or Civil Rulers, into a conſtant Concomitancy or Attendance upon ſuch or ſuch Religious Services, ſolely upon the account of that Humane Significancy, Decency, and Order the Nature of Man is apt to clothe all its Actions with. Juſt as in all Inſtalments of Magiſtrates, in Courts of Judicature, in Proceedings of Juſtice, in all the Grandeur of Humane Actions, there are ſome Rites, Formalities, or Ceremonies, Men find out, that give Order, Life, and Grace to the Carriage of them: Even ſo in Religious

ligious Services it is suppos'd they have the same Liberty; God is not so rigorous, as to deny it to them; they may appoint some things of a meer *Humane Significancy*, for *Edification*, which remain still perfect *Indifferents*, and only wait upon Religion, and preserve *Discipline*; and yet they may be impos'd, and pinn'd so fast to Religion, that All must be observ'd together; no Publick Ordinance may be enjoy'd, with Allowance and Approbation, without them.

Now whether there is such a Liberty granted by God to Men, to adjoyn any thing to his Worship, especially so as to be made the Publick Standard, is more than the wisest can, I doubt, resolve in the Affirmative, to satisfaction: There are so many Appearances from Scripture, from sound Reason, against any more than is commanded by God himself, or is of absolute Necessity, Order, or Decency, so as to offer it self to every sober Man.

But allow to these Institutions of Men all the Privileges of *Indifferents*, of these *seal'd Indifferents*, declar'd so by the Apostle, so that you allow no more; (for more cannot be allow'd, except you change them into *Doctrine*, which makes them worse:) Allow, that they are *the weak*, who do not understand their full Freedom herein; then it follows, He that uses them not, must not indeed think himself the better for not using them; but still he has liberty, as in a thing *indifferent* in it self, not to use them; and he ought by no means to use them *with doubt*, and so long as they appear unlawful to him; for then comes upon him that Thunderbolt of the *Apostle*, If he *doubts*, and yet does what he doubts of, he is *condemned*; *because whatever is not of Faith, is Sin.* He that is *fully perswaded in his own mind* to use them, may use them; and they ought to appear of that Value to him, that he can *give God thanks* for them *with understanding*; for that is one Character of the *Apostles Indifferents*, and a severe Test upon them it is.

But yet he must not think himself *the better* for them, or that such things can *commend him to God.*

He must not use them to the *scandalising* the *weaker* than himself, even while the *World standeth*; that is, while the Reason of Doubt can in the Nature of that Reason remain.

And he must allow, that his *Indifferents* are as subject to *Scandal*, as the *Indifferents* the *Apostle* discourses upon are; and if the very reasonably-to-be-suppos'd *Scandal* in these (of themselves) so harmless *Indifferents*, be well consider'd, I doubt there will be found a great and wide Sea for this *Leviathan* to roll it self in. Now that I may make this Consideration more orderly, I shall distribute it according to the several Ranges of Persons concern'd, and endanger'd by *Scandal* in these *Indifferents*. And I begin with

1. Those that comply with that side of them which the *Strongest* chuse, that is, the Use of them; because this is immediately under the *Apostles* Eye: I say, that comply, but are *not fully perswaded in their own mind.* Now the *Apostle* imputes their Compliance to the Power of Example, which is the freest sort of Compliance: For, though he had taken notice of *Despisings* in the former part of the Discourse, yet he waves that; Impositions by Church-Censures, or Penalties, were quite out of his Thoughts; he arrests them upon Example, the most ingenuous sort of Compulsion, and submitting to it the most spontaneous Conformity: Yet both to the *Romans*, and the *Corinths*, here he places the danger of *scandalising* and *Scandal.*

If thy *Brother* (saith he) *be grieved with thy Meat*, that is, *not grieved* that thou *eatest*, but drawn to *eat*, as thou dost, yet not perswaded, as thou art, and so receiving a real Wound and Grief in his Conscience, by following thy Example, *thou walkest not charitably.* More expresly to this purpose the *Apostle* speaks to the *Corinthians*, If any Man *see thee, which hast knowledge*, sit at *Meat* in an *Idols Temple, shall not the Conscience of him that is weak be edified*

to

to eat those things which are offered to Idols? Thus evident it is, Example is that which the *Apostles* τυπος in the very words points to. Now in that he lays this sort of *Scandalising* so low as in Example, he plants his Argument with greater force against any other Way, that is more forcible than Example. Here then is the *Scandal*, as given. The *Scandal* taken, is the rushing against that Principle of Religion, That the *full sense of a Mans own Mind*, and what is to him of *Faith*, is in *Indifferent Things* the Square of his Actions; and the contrary is Sin, and *Scandal*. This is most evident in the *Apostle* to the *Romans*; his whole Discourse runs into this, as the *Scandal* he intends to speak of. To the *Corinths* it may be more Dispute where the *Scandal* lay, because the Sin seems to be a Relapse into *Idolatrous eating, in an Idols Temple, the Meats offered to Idols*: And that Expression, *of eating with Conscience of the Idol, things offered to Idols, as offered to Idols*, is at the first view almost enforcive of that Sense; but by closer attention, it appears much otherwise: For, I observe, the *Apostle* upon the occasion discourses first the Case it self, in the eighth Chapter: In Chap. 9. in a Figure transferred to himself, he treats the necessary Retreat from our own Liberty in some Cases, as a motive to all Christians to do the same. In the tenth Chapter he discourses the great danger of *Idolatry it self*, which might be drawn as a Snare upon both *the weak*, and *the strong*, by often Converse with *Idolaters*, and their Rites; and the intolerable Guilt and Danger of that, made forcible by several Arguments; and then towards the end of that Chapter, resumes the plain Case of the *weak*, who not understanding Gods superiour surmounting Right, over the *Idols*, consider'd only the great evil of eating *in honour to the Idol*, and believed the *Meat* and the *Temple* irrecoverably *defiled* by it: They had not the *knowledge*, that an *Idol* was *nothing*, and therefore could not affect things themselves, to all that keep themselves *pure*, and

know

know that Gods Right overcomes, and his filling all things excludes all others, and their Right becomes a Nothing. But *ſome not having this knowledge, eat in a Temple Meats* that had the *Idols Superſcription* and *Image upon them* (as they thought) not in any *Honour to the Idol*, but tyded along by Example to communicate in what they yet eſteemed *defiled* and *polluted*, though indeed it was not ſo, but to thoſe that *eſteemed* it ſo. This Point the *Apoſtle* plainly enters upon, *Chap.* 10. *v.* 23. going off from that of *Idolatry*, in theſe Words, *All things are lawful, &c.* And *ver.* 28. he thus opens what he intends; If any Man, as in a fright at ſo hainous a thing, as eating the defiled *Meat*, that had been conſecrate to an *Idol*, *ſay unto you, This is offered in Sacrifice to Idols, eat not for his ſake that ſhewed it*, and for *his Conſcience-ſake, not thy own*, that was ſcar'd at it, as if unclean in it ſelf, and yet might be drawn to *eat it*, as ſuch, by thy Example, not *Idolatrouſly*, but with a *doubting Conſcience*. And the very ſame Reaſon, why out of this Caſe of anothers Scandal, a Man might eat, even becauſe *the Earth is the Lords*, and *the fulneſs of it*, his Right cannot be retrench'd, nothing can be made unclean in it ſelf that is Gods; the very ſame is given for *not eating*, in caſe of *Scandal*, *The Earth is the Lords*, and *the fulneſs of it*; that is, We are not tied up to one Thing, to aſſert Gods Right in that only, that we muſt needs run *our Brother into Scandal* for it: *The Earth*, that has room enough; and the *Fulneſs of it*, a full Table (beſides that ſuppos'd to be the Idols) is the *Lords*, and his Bounty to be enjoyed in all, acknowledged, praiſed in all; ſo that we may *pleaſe All*, that is, conſult their trueſt Good, and *give no Scandal*; for that the *Apoſtle* means by *pleaſing*, and oppoſes it to *grieving* and *wounding*. Thus large I have been in bringing the Caſe to the *Romans*, and to theſe *Corinthians* to much the ſame level and pitch, (except the Meats be ſuſpected fouler by Dedication to an Idol, than by

by the meer *Moſaick* Interdict) that the main Point of *Scandal* might be ſetled. For, though I ſhall allow juſt Conſideration to all other Points of *Scandal*, and to the other Interpretation, *viz.* That the Apoſtle diſcourſes againſt thoſe *Idolatrous Contaminations*, thoſe Pangs of Devotion, and *Reverence of the Idol*, the tender new-converted Chriſtian might relapſe into, by *eating in the Idols Temple, at the Idols Feaſt*; yet the main Point is, *eating with offence*, with a *Conſcience* not ſatisfied, the *Meats* that were pure in themſelves, but to them appeared impure; as is evident by the much different ſharpneſs of Style the *Apoſtle* uſes in the danger of *Idolatry*, and the Caſe of the *Doubting Conſcience*.

The immediate Principle *offended* againſt, is then, The Government Conſcience ought to have over Man, appointed it by God, againſt which nothing Humane ought to prevail, nor can do, but with the great miſchief of *Scandal*.

Beſides this, there is ſome other Rule, or Principle of Truth, guiding Conſcience, and preſſing upon it in caſe of *Scandal*; for Conſcience is not to guide a Man, but as it repreſents to him ſome Truth, to guide it ſelf and him by: elſe, as when the *Blind lead the Blind*, both will *fall into the Ditch*. And when this Principle, that preſſes hard upon Conſcience, and to which Conſcience defers it ſelf, is over-born, then a Man is *ſcandaliſed*.

The Principle, Conſcience, in the Caſe of the *Romans*, had lying hard upon it, was this:

Whatever God hath forbidden once, *as unclean*, is unclean, and is ſo long unclean, till we know that Prohibition is removed. The *weak Chriſtian* did not believe the forbidding ſome Meats as *unclean*, was removed; yet by the countenance of Example in the ſtronger Chriſtians, they were ſo hardy as to *eat*, while *Conſcience was unſatisfied*, and ſo were *ſcandaliſed*.

Conſcience

Conſcience in the *Corinths* had this Principle looking it full in the Face; To *eat in an Idols Right*, in *Honour to Idols*, is an abomination to God. The weak Chriſtian abhorring *Idols*, or to *eat in Honour of them*, did not as yet underſtand there could be a Separation betwixt the Pollution of the *Idol*, and the *Meat*, or the *Temple* where he was worſhipped: yet emboldned by ſeeing the *ſtronger ſit at Meat in an Idols Temple*, they *eat*, and were inwardly affrighted at the unclean Meat they *eat*; they *eat with Conſcience of the Idol*, the *Meat as offered to the Idol*, through the force of Example; that is, abhorring indeed *the Idol*, and his *Meat*; but withal, fearing it, as an Evil, and looking upon the Meat as impure, becauſe *ſacrificed to an Idol*.

In both theſe Caſes the *Apoſtle* levels againſt the uſe *of Liberty in the ſtronger*, againſt impoſing by way of Example, to the *ſcandal* of the *weaker*; ſo tender a thing it is to offer but the *Loweſt Rule* of Compulſion in theſe Caſes.

The *Impoſer* then, though but by Example, is he that *ſcandaliſes*: The Complier againſt the Senſe of his own Mind, inſtructed not by Truth and Reaſon ſatisfying him, but by Example leading him, is the *Scandaliſed*.

Things being thus ſtated, let us obſerve the *Scandal* it ſelf, how it works in this Caſe.

1. There is an Act of high Diſobedience committed againſt God, and his Authority, repreſented by Conſcience; both in that Conſcience, deputed by God, is depoſed, and Example ſet up in its place; as alſo that a Divine Law upon Conſcience it ſelf, ſuppoſed to continue in force, is violated; for though it ſhould be indeed antiquated, yet if Conſcience knows not it is ſo, it cannot act *of Faith* and *full perſwaſion*, and ſo ſins.

2. Conſcience is hereupon *grieved*, *wounded*, and loſes its due Comfort.

3. This begets a Flatneſs and Formality in all Religious Services.

4. A Lukewarmneſs to Religion in general; thus a Man is *weakned* by his *Stumble* and *Fall*, he lies proſtrate in all Religious Powers.

5. *Conſcience* loſes its due vigour and exerciſe of Authority.

6. There is danger of *Apoſtacy* from *Chriſtianity* it ſelf, or the true Senſe of Religion.

7. Hereupon the Soul is in danger to be loſt, and the *work of God to be deſtroyed*, and he *for whom Chriſt died, to periſh*, if not recovered by Repentance. Thus it was with the *Romans* and the *Corinths*.

Now to bring this to the Balance with Impoſitions in *Ceremonies*, or *Indifferents*, in after-Times. Firſt, Suppoſe the Sentiments of the Mind and Conſcience of many *Chriſtians* deeply ingag'd, and lock'd in this Principle, That in the Worſhip of God, no Man may *add*, or *diminiſh*, ſo much as to a Point, beyond Divine Inſtitution, and the moſt natural Circumſtances, and neceſſary Adherencies of all Solemn and Grave Humane Actions: That there muſt be nothing of Humane Device, for Edification or Significancy, but what is preſcrib'd. And no Man can deny, but this is a ſafe Poſition, conſidering both the Stream of Scripture, ſound Reaſon, and the Experience of all Ages, how much miſchief hath come ſtealing up from Ceremonies, as high as to Idolatry and Superſtition.

But let us withal allow, That though no Man can be the *better* for uſing theſe *Indifferents*, nor the *worſe* for not uſing them; yet there is a Liberty to *uſe them*, without being the *worſe* for uſing them, if a Man be *fully perſuaded in his own mind* concerning them. It muſt remain yet, that according to the *Apoſtles* Doctrine, every Man that *uſes* them, and *doubts* of their lawfulneſs with reſpect to the forenamed Principle, is *condemned* in the uſing them, becauſe *not of Faith*, and ſo ſubject to all the juſt-now-recounted Miſchiefs of *Scandal*.

And that therefore, He that uſes them ſo as to preſs thoſe that are *otherwiſe minded*, to a Conformity, by his Example (if it be no more), much more if by *Deſpiſings*, Cenſures, Vexations, Penalties; he does not *walk charitably*, he *ſins againſt Chriſtians*, *wounds their weak Conſciences*, and ſo *ſins againſt Chriſt* in a high Degree; and for his Ceremonies, the *work of God is deſtroyed*, and he *for whom Chriſt died periſhes*, if not ſav'd by Repentance. Now how high does this riſe up to the *Woe Chriſt denounces on him by whom Scandals come*?

For, it cannot but be ſuppos'd, there are many that are wrought upon, againſt the ſenſe of their own Minds, to ſuch a Conformity, as wherein they cannot but *condemn themſelves* wherein they ſeem *to allow themſelves*, or do indeed *allow themſelves*, ſo far as the outward Act reaches: Who can doubt, but in theſe days there are ſuch, as well as in the Days of the firſt Chriſtians? Yea, *happy* are many of thoſe that Conform, if they do not *condemn themſelves wherein they allow themſelves*, and carry the Miſchief of their *Scandal* within themſelves, ſilently from others, and often ſecretly from themſelves.

And even where Men ſtand out againſt all preſſure upon them, and will not receive this Dint of *Scandal*, yet it is ſtill a *Scandal* offered, while unaccepted.

All this now ſeems ſo ſtrong againſt impoſing in things of *Indifferency*, for fear of *Scandal* in them, that it is wonder there ſhould be any Impoſition known in ſuch things among *Chriſtians*, for fear of *Scandal*; and yet in theſe very things of *Indifferency*, *Scandal* hath run like Wild-fire, bluſter'd and roar'd like a Tempeſt, in theſe of all things, to chuſe, and that in all Ages within the Chriſtian World, and even under *Proteſtancy* it ſelf.

But I am to conſider *Scandal* in a ſecond Rank, *viz.* of thoſe who do vehemently and zealouſly fall in with Conformity to theſe Impoſitions in *Indifferents*, yet they may be

be *ſcandaliſed*, and that very deeply. This Caſe does not, I confeſs, ariſe out of the *Apoſtles* Diſcourſes, except by the other Interpretation of the Scope of that to the *Corinths*; which gives it not onely, as if Compliance againſt the Sentiments of Conſcience, upon the Truſt of Example, were the Sin and *Scandal*; but that the *weaker Chriſtians*, not having the Knowledge of the *ſtronger*, doing as they did, and not prepoſſeſs'd as they were, that the *Idol* was nothing, ſunk into ſome Degrees at leaſt of *Idolatrous* Reverence and Worſhip, as if they knew no other Reaſon of *eating in an Idols Temple*, but Devotion to him: And this kind of *Scandal*, though I believe the driſt of the *Apoſtle* is chiefly as I have explained it, yet too often falls out in theſe Caſes. Thoſe Ceremonies that have been promoted into Divine Services, or into the Ornament of Religion, and the Places of it, have been, though dangerouſly enough, yet not ſo ill deſign'd, as afterwards abuſed by more Ignorant Perſons, who greedy and fond of a ſenſual and external Religion, have been tranſported upon *Superſtition*, and ſometimes downright *Idolatry*; and this often noted in Scripture under the very Name of *Scandal*. Thus I before obſerv'd in the Caſe of *Gideons Ephod, his Houſe and all Iſrael* were *inſnar'd* beyond the firſt Intention: Thus in the *Brazen Serpent*, continued (no doubt) in memory of the Miracle; yet afterwards prov'd ſo great a *Snare*, that they *burnt Incenſe to it*. And it is moſt likely, *Balaam caſt his Snare* at firſt in a leſs-guilty Feaſting with the *Midianites* upon their *Idols Sacrifices*, not known to be ſuch poyſonous Meat, and by degrees toll'd them on into the midſt of the *Congregation* and *Aſſembly of Idolaters*. Thus the *Apoſtles*, by Divine Direction, condeſcending to the weakneſs of Convert-*Jews* among the *Romans*, on conſideration of the Divine Command in ſome of their Rites but juſt now expiring, degenerated afterward into ſuch a *Judaiſm*, that the ſame *Apoſtle* was moſt ſevere againſt it; and that very

Strength of the *Corinthian* Christians, or at least the *Weakness* of the Unknowing, following their Example, became afterwards into an infamous Doctrine, *the Doctrine of Balaam*, and the very inchanting Seduction of the *Propheteſs Jezebel, who taught the People of Chriſt to commit Fornication, and to eat things offered to Idols*, in honour to them. The bringing in of Pictures into Places of Religious Worſhip, ſuppoſe it as innocent as could be ſuppos'd at firſt, yet was abus'd ſpeedily into all imaginable Corruption; and it is much to be fear'd, all the Remonſtrances concerning more Innocent Rites, as they can't vindicate them from Scrupuloſity on one ſide, ſo can't preſerve them from Mens placing too much of their Religion in them on the other, whereby the true *Conſcience* of it is weakned, the Vertue and Vigour of Conſcience in things truly Religious, weakned and ſpent, by having been laid out unneceſſarily upon extern Obſervances; and looſneſs of Life, like *Fornication with eating things offered to Idols*, breaking in upon the Commute of ſuch Flatteries of *Conſcience* for ſubſtantial Piety, as the *Jews* would exchange *New-Moons* and *Oblations*, for *Juſtice*, and *Mercy*, and *walking humbly with God*.

It muſt be indeed acknowledg'd, not onely Humane Appointments, but even Divine Commands, are ſubject to the Injury of *Scandal*; but with this difference: One cannot be cut off, though *Scandal* preſſes never ſo hard; the other may, and ought: For, in all things not ordained by God, the Principle ſinned againſt in *Scandal* is the exceeding Purity of Religion, the ſubſtantial Piety, and moſt Spiritual and Rational Worſhip of himſelf God requires and expects by his Word; and that all things he has commanded be adjuſted to thoſe Ends, even as he provided them; and all he has not commanded, ſhould ſtand off, or at leaſt be preſently ſuperſeded, when become the Prey of *Scandal*. Yet on the other ſide, *Scandal* ſhelters it ſelf under Order, Decency, or Edification of the Ignorant, Obedience

dience to Authority; and preſſes on to the utmoſt under them.

3. The third ſort of *Scandal* ariſing from Indifferent Things, upon thoſe that will not be at all perſwaded to a Compliance with them; even they may be *ſcandaliſed*, by unlawful and very ſinful Cenſoriouſneſs, and Paſſion; placing too much of their ſenſe of Religion upon their diſlike of ſuch Additions to Divine Worſhip; Diviſions and Separations on both ſides from the Publickeſt Worſhip of God, and National Union in Religion, beyond the Merit and Quality of the Cauſe, or further than the Caſe at its utmoſt extent can require; and if the Sin of *Schiſm* be ſuch, as the endeavour'd Notion of it would make it, a Fall into the great Sin of *Schiſm*.

The Principle offended againſt in this ſort of *Scandal*, is, That great *Love* of Chriſtians, and Union in Divine Worſhip, in Truth, and Peace, made ſo Fundamental in Chriſtianity by *Chriſt* and the *Apoſtles*.

The pretence of *Scandal* lies too both ways, That for the ſake of ſuch Additionals, we may deſert thoſe much higher Conſiderations, and Reaſons, and Cauſes of *Love* and Union, and our Obligations to them.

The *Apoſtle* repreſents this great Miſchief, not under the formal Account of *Scandal*, in the Diſcourſe to the *Romans*, though I doubt not he after refers to it expreſly as ſuch, when he joyns *Scandals* and *Diviſions* together; but in the Diſcourſe it ſelf he both ſets out the Heat on both ſides, in *judging* and *deſpiſing*, and argues on both ſides, with higheſt ſtrength of Divine Reaſon, againſt the Evil both ways. Rom. 16. 17.

And this is certain, The more excellent our Religion, the more deſirable our Publick Worſhip and Communion, for the Piety, Rationality, and Order of it, the more pure our *National Church*, and Aſſociation in Religion is, and the greater the Sin of *Separation*; the more does the Apoſtles

ſles Argument againſt *ſcandaliſing* for the ſake of Indifferencies, preſs and urge us: Why ſhould *our Good* be thought evil of, or *blaſphem'd*? Why ſhould our Publick Worſhip, and National Religion, be once thought to be *Ceremony*? Why ſhould our Communion be clogg'd with things of no greater avail, than *Meat* and *Drink*? Why ſhould we loſe thoſe from our Communion, who own, *The Kingdom of God is Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*; and contend for thoſe Divine things, though they have not leiſure and freedom for Ceremonies; when they that ſerve God in them, though they cannot joyn in leſſer things, yet as they are *accepted of God*, ſo ſhould be *approved of Men*? Or if the Sin of Separation be ſo great, and even *Schiſm* it ſelf, why *for our Meat, for our Indifferent things*, ſhould *they periſh*, for whom Chriſt died; or ſuch a *Work of God* as appears in them, be *deſtroyed*?

4. The Severity, Paſſion, Tranſport beyond the Values of the things themſelves, and taking up the *Inſtruments of Cruelty*, cannot be without *Scandal* upon the Impoſers of *Indifferency*; and thoſe that will needs be *Task-maſters* under them, cannot be without *Scandal*: For, while they ſeem to be zealous of Order, Deceney, Uniformity, they ſin againſt the Precepts of *Love, Unity, Mercy, Peace*, and exchange too often thoſe excellent *Paſtoral-Staves* of *Beauty* and *Bands*, for the Inſtruments of the *fooliſh Shepherd*, that extend not to any true Acts of *Paſtoral* Care, *Viſiting, Healing, Feeding*, but *Tearing* and *Rending*.

Zech. 11. 7. 15. 16.

Laſtly, By-ſtanders and Neuters have the *Woe to the World*, becauſe of *Scandals*, coming upon them; for they miſ-judge of the excellent Religion of the Goſpel, by theſe great Miſcarriages; and it falls under their miſrepute, as if it ſtood in Ceremonials: in regard of whom, the *Apoſtle* was ſo cautious, that the *Good of Chriſtians* ſhould not be *evil ſpoken of*, as if the *Kingdom of God* was only *Meat and Drink*. For whereas the Subſtantials of Chriſtianity juſtifie

ſie themſelves to the Conſciences of all Men, Ceremonials lead to Atheiſm; as if Religion were but the Craft of Parties, uſing Trifles for Intereſt, Rule, and Domination; and Differences in the Profeſſion of it, when multiplied by Diſputes about theſe *Indifferents*, bring miſtruſt upon all, as if there were nothing certain. Laſtly, the Heats, Cruelties, and Perſecutions uſed on theſe Accounts, cannot but look very ſtrange, and full of horrour, to the very Light of Nature.

For, how can it but appear Prodigie, and Portent, that Chriſtian Religion, that counted upon nothing but Perſecution of it ſelf in the World, ſhould turn the Weapons uſed againſt it, upon it ſelf; as hath been moſt notoriouſly infamous in the Popiſh Inhumanities? Or what Stranger can think well of ſuch a Chriſtianity? And then more dire it is, that *Proteſtant Religion*, branding *Popery* as a Religion of Blood, ſhoud be ſo much as tinctur'd with any of *that Spirit*; and that any of theſe Evils ſhould be for the ſake, and upon the account of *Indifferents*, that are acknowledged to be *deviſed by Men*, that are not *equal to Gods Law*, that may be *chang'd*, for which other *Countries*, that uſe them not, are to be *condemn'd*; whereas Subſtantial Order and Decency are the ſame throughout the *World*, ſome ſmall Local Differences allowed for.

This is the great Cauſe of Complaint: But on the other ſide, the Reaſons that appear to Diſſenters againſt them are great and weighty in themſelves: Let them be miſtaken in the Application; yet a great Reaſon on the contrary to any thing, if miſapprehended, is of much more weight, than a very ſlight and inconſiderable Reaſon for it, however true: And, though in a much inferiour Cauſe, I acknowledge, yet I hope it is not unlawful to make an Alluſion to that unavoidable Argument againſt Atheiſm, *That the enduring of inconſiderable Inconveniencies, though certain, is much more eligible to a wiſe Man, than the adventure*

ture upon intolerable and endleſs Inconveniency, though ſuppoſ'd uncertain. In a like manner, though of a lower conſequence, and yet not altogether lower, *The great miſchief of* Scandal, *though poſſibly upon miſtake, is not to be hazarded upon, ſuppoſe, the more certain little Inconveniences of Mens not conforming to* Indifferencies.

But that there may be a more equal Poiſe of the Matter, I ſhall briefly preſent the Objections againſt Indulgence to Diſſenters in *Indifferencies*, upon the account of *Scandal*, and the Anſwers that may be returned to them.

Object. 1. *If* Scandal *were an Argument againſt things, we muſt go out of all things, even* out of the World, *nay, out of Religion it ſelf; for all things are full of* Scandal, *even the beſt things.*

Anſw. It would be yet a conſiderable Service done to the World, the Chriſtian World, if but ſo much of *Scandal* were defalk'd, as hath its play in *Indifferents*: The abatement would be above what can eaſily be believed, if all that hath ſwell'd the Account of *Scandal* from *Indifferent Things*, had been wiſely and thriftily cut off, from the entrance of Chriſtianity to this day.

And the Sting of the Argument, why it ſhould have been, and yet ſhould be ſo, is, That they are but *Indifferents* that are ſpoken of, the Uſe of which makes us not the *better*, nor the non-uſe the *worſe*: But the miſchief of *Scandal* is incomputably great, ſo that the advantage of ſuch an Abatement had brought Infinite Recompence with Uſury, in *Truth* and *Peace*, for that little Profit, if any, that could grow from barren and dead *Indifferents* in Religion, though conſidered as ſeparate from *Scandal.*

Object. 2. *The* Apoſtle *himſelf was enforced* to change his Voice *concerning Indulgence to the* weak, *in the* Judaique Rites, *and to vote the perſiſting in a Love to them damnable; and the Holy Spirit brands the* Idolothytes *conceded by the* Apoſtle, *to be afterwards the* Doctrine of Balaam: *So that the*

the Weakneſs of Conſciences about Indifferent *Things becomes ſo maſterleſs, unruly, and headſtrong, as to indanger main Concernments in Religion, if not reformed, the due time of Indulgence being allowed for it.*

Anſw. The Miſchief, if nearly obſerved, always grows from making more Acceſſions to the Worſhip of God, and Religious Services, than God hath made: For the *Judaizing* in the *Galatians*, the *Will-Worſhip* and *ſhew of Wiſdom* among the *Coloſſians*, the *forbidding to marry*, and *commanding to abſtain from Meats*, all grow upon the ſame Root: Even the Idolatry and Luxury of the *Idolothytes*, came not from a wiſe and Chriſtian aſſerting God's Right above the *Idol's*, but from ſinking down into the ſenſual Worſhip of the *Idol*, by a daily Converſation at *his Table* in *his Temple*, and uniting *Heatheniſm* with *Chriſtianity*; of one of which, either *Judaiſm* or *Heatheniſm*, moſt Rites are but the Offspring.

The great Danger is either in exalting Gods Creatures into a ſtate, and for Uſes and Ends, above what he Ordained them, at Humane pleaſure and arbitrament; or retrenching the Liberty God hath given in the free uſe of his own *Creatures*; for *every Creature of God is good*, and nothing to be refuſed, *if received with thanksgiving: For it is ſanctified by the Word of God and Prayer.* Now this cannot alike extend to the Signs and Ceremonies created by Humane Imagination, and impoſed with rigour, and that not only on Civil Accounts, which we meddle not with, but upon Religious, where God is only Supreme: At which Door hath entred all the Idolatry and Superſtition into the World, winding it ſelf by leſſer Degrees, and ſo mounting it ſelf to the very top.

The great Uſe of the *Apoſtle's* two Diſcourſes, is therefore to be reſolved into this one main Poſition. That upon the account of *Indifferencies*, wherein the *uſe* or *non-uſe* cannot commend us to God, we ſhould not *Scandaliſe*,

nor ſo much as offer *Scandal* to any of the Servants of Chriſt.

In all which it is duly to be conſidered, That *Scandal* runs in the Induſtrious Impoſing and binding Obſervation, either by Example that expects Conformity to it, or any more violent Influence upon Compliance: That which the Apoſtle therefore perſwades to, was not any thing of *Ritual Diſtinction of Days or Meats*, but only the not eating ſuch or ſuch Meats, happened in theſe two Caſes to be the Expedient againſt *Scandal*, he therefore perſwades the *not eating* upon theſe Contingencies, as by the by, which was a very eaſie performance for Chriſtian Charity; but the Thing he was wholly intent upon, was that great Doctrine of not *Scandaliſing* for the ſake of *Indifferent Things*. Theſe Circumſtances eaſily vaniſhed, the main Point remains unmoved. They were only a *Scheme*, a momentany and tranſitory one, to diſplay this great Doctrine in, and to preſent it upon.

When theſe things grew into a *Ritual Religion*, the *Scheme* was altered and ſhifted, they grew ſinful, and were condemned; the Doctrine ſtood yet, and for ever ſtands firm, planted upon them.

Object. 4. *The Rites uſed are ſuch as are recommended from* Antiquity, *and were of uſe of old, in the* Primitive Church.

Anſw. Allow it to be ſo. All that can be collected from thence, is but Example, wound up to its higheſt Peg, when it does not reach Chriſt: And whenever it does not reach him, it does not bind. *Be ye followers of me, as I am of Chriſt*, ſaid the *Apoſtle*, juſt about to diſcourſe of the παραδόσεις, *Ordinances* or *Traditions*. Thoſe Concurrences, *All*, *Every where*, *Always*, muſt begin in Scripture, and be found there, elſe they do but oblige our Prudence, not our Conſcience.

1 Cor. 11. 1.

Only ſo far as *Antiquity*, or the *Primitive Church*, in-

ables

ables us to see with our own Eyes the Sense of Scripture, or the Determinations of Natural Light and Reason in any Case, so far it obliges us in Conscience. All else is but the Deference of Modesty and due Regard, which cannot weigh against *Scandal*, except we make the *Oracles* of *Antiquity*, equal to the *Heavenly Oracles*; and then we must demand the same Certainty of the *Divine Inspiration* of the one, as of the other, or else we may quickly run into the greatest of *Scandals*.

Object. 5. *The Commands of Lawful Authority take away the* Indifferency, *and make* Necessary, *what was before* Indifferent.

Answ. The Question is not, Whether Magistrates ought to be obeyed in all things *Indifferent*; for that is readily granted, if in all Circumstances they are *Indifferent*; nor whether Rites are *Indifferent* Things, for that is also supposed to be granted; but the question must be, Whether it is an *indifferent* thing to give or receive *Scandal*, upon the account of *Indifferent Things*; seeing that may indisputably fall out, or the *Apostles* Discourses fall to the Ground; and in one sort of *Indifferents*, as well as others, else the *Apostles* Discourse will be ineffectual to any the like Case: Seeing then the Tribunal and Authority of God is higher, than of any of the Supreams of this World, and that *Scandal* is cognisable only before him; and that whatever incurs *Sandal* is inseparable from Sin against God; it must needs follow, that in a Case of *Doubt*, from which a Man cannot acquit himself, he cannot *obey Men* in that, without *disobeying God*, who hath declared to him, *Whatever is not of Faith is Sin*; and he that *doubteth*, and *doth* what he *doubteth* of, is *Damned*; that is, *Condemned* within himself, and in the thing it self: And the Reason in such a Case must be the same, as in a Case of Obeying Magistrates against any express Divine Prohibition. For though the thing *doubted* of, does much differ, if it be indeed *indiffe-*

rent: Yet the Prohibition is as plain againſt doing what is *doubted* of, and what is not *of Faith*, as in any Caſe.

Seeing then all Humane Authority muſt lower its Top to Divine, I cannot ſee, but that, in *Indifferent things in Religion*, which is Gods peculiar, for we ſpeak only of that, the Magiſtrates Power is excluded, in caſe of real *doubt* of *Conſcience*, in which a Man can do nothing, but he runs into Gods danger, even as in any other caſe of ſuch danger, by reaſon of Sin. And what is offered in Relief, will not avail, *viz.* That Obedience to Magiſtrates is certainly a Duty; but whether there be any diſobedience to God, about ſuch or ſuch *Indifferents*, is in *doubt*; and if the thing be indeed *indifferent*, it is a *doubt* upon miſtake: And then there is a diſobedience to God, in an *undoubted* Rule, and Command to avoid it in a caſe not only of *doubt*, but of miſtake.

This, I ſay, cannot avail; Becauſe the meaſure is not to be drawn betwixt Obedience to Magiſtrates in all *lawful things*, or *things indifferent*; but betwixt Obedience to Magiſtrates, and Obedience to that Rule of the Word of God in all caſes of *doubt*, which is as clear, and as little ſubject to *doubt*, as any Rule whatever. Yet does not this evacuate the Power of Magiſtrates, it being reſtrained to things *indifferent* in Religion, and in *Doubt*, and the *Doubt* fixed upon a grand Principle of Truth.

Nor is that of greate ſatisfaction, That in Obedience to Magiſtrates, there are ſo many degrees of Good, and ſo many of Evil in the Diſobedience; but in doing well or ill, concerning *Indifferents*, there are much fewer Degrees, both of the Good, and the Evil; therefore Obedience to God, in ſo great a *Morality*, as Obedience to Magiſtrates, is always to be preferred before our doing well in *Indifferents*; and the fear of Evil in one, to be avoided much rather, than the ſame fear in the other.

The

The Reaſon of Diſſatisfaction is this, That the Meaſure is not betwixt the Morality of Obedience to God, in obeying Magiſtrates, and doing well or ill about things *Indifferent*, but betwixt the Morality of *Obeying God* in one of his clear and undoubted Precepts, and in another of the ſame Evidence and Clearneſs; which muſt needs be one and the ſame, and of the ſame Rate of *Morality*: Seeing Obedience to God is the *Fundamental Morality*.

If it were not thus, the Magiſtrates Prohibition of *Sacrifice* of the *Cup in the Lords Supper*, muſt exempt from Obedience to God in thoſe Duties; becauſe Obedience to Magiſtrates is a *Moral* Duty, but the other *Ceremonial*.

But it is out of Meaſure certain, Obedience to God is both the top and the bottom of all *Morality*; and although Obedience to Magiſtrates is a great point of *Morality*, yet Obedience to God is ſo before it, as to be the Meaſure of it.

Beſides, if Obedience to God be to be valued not by his Authority, but by weighing the Precepts themſelves, much more Obedience to Magiſtrates is to be eſtimated by the Commands they give, of which *Indifferents* in Religion will never be made out to be worthy to be the Teſts, either of their Authority, or our Obedience; whatever unthinking Men have ſaid therein.

Indeed among the Divine Commands, God hath choſen *Mercy*, rather than *Sacrifice*, *honouring Parents*, rather than *Corban*, but it is becauſe he hath ſo declared in his Word, and in Mens Conſciences.

But all the Laws of God do harmoniouſly Conſpire, and Subordinate themſelves one to another, among which Obedience to Magiſtrates, and Preſerving the Government, and Peace of Conſcience, are none of the leaſt, nor of any conteſt, or diſtance of unkindneſs between themſelves: *Whoſo is wiſe? He ſhall underſtand theſe things: Prudent? And he ſhall know them; for the ways of the Lord are right in themſelves, and lye in ſtreight Lines one to another; the*

Juſt

Just shall walk in them, though Transgressors fall therein.

In fine, *Magistrates*, especially *Christian Magistrates*, are as much oblig'd against pushing on *Scandal*, as private Christians, and more, as they are the *Custodes*, the *Publick Guardians of Conscience*. But if they fail in their Duty, Obedience to them cannot disannul the Charges against *Scandal*, lying upon all *Christians*, in Relation to one another; nor can their Laws prescribe against Moderation.

Obj. 6. *But when time is allowed to the* Doubtful *to satisfy themselves, if they come not off from their Scruples, it argues* Humor *and* Faction *are highest in the Case; or a* Superstition *on the other side.*

Answ. The *Apostle* tells us, it is a very *happy*, a *very rare thing*, when Christians surmount their *Doubts*. *Happy is he that Condemns not himself, wherein he allows himself*; It is a very *Priviledged Case* to be well and wisely satisfied after *Doubt*; and therefore it must not be hastily censured, if those that have been unsatisfied cannot presently answer our Lure to the other side.

And the time is much larger, that is necessary in some Cases, than in others: The *Ceremonies of* Moses, it was reasonable should go off more quick, as *Shaddows of the Night*, by the brightness of the Gospel, and could never return any more. But the Reasons against *eating* at an *Idols Feast*, being nearer *Moral*, are much more durable, and may last, *even while the World stands*, where, or when-ever *Idolatry* has place.

In the first *Reformation* from *Popery*, there was Reason to expect, the Superstitious Rites and Customs, that had gained upon Mens Minds with the Reputation of Religion, should be daily wearing off; but the Reasons of Doubt in *Indifferents* affixed to *Divine Worship*, taken from that perpetual Obligation of preserving it pure, fetled upon the Base of truest, soundest Reason, and much more favoured by *Scripture*, well arm'd with Experience of Events, must always continue in force, and so no Time may be large enough

enough for getting off from thoſe Scruples that ſpring from them, but that wherein they are indeed taken away.

But if any thing of Turbulency, Faction, or Unrulineſs be ſuppoſed to lye deeper than the Scruples; it is beſt to unmask it, by taking away ſo juſt a Cauſe to mannage it ſelf, upon and by ſo great a kindneſs to Conſcience, that ought to be tendered, *to heap Coals of Fire upon the heads of ſuch Perſons*, either to *reform* them, or *condemn* them beyond *Apologie*.

Or if *Superſtition*, and placing *Religion* on the other ſide, in having a *Zeal* againſt *Ceremonies* be ſuſpected; even that does but increaſe the *Scandal* ariſing from theſe *Indifferent Things*, and makes them more neceſſary to be remov'd, as *Stumbling-Blocks* out of Mens way; you cure the *Superſtition* on the other ſide too, by taking away the Cauſe.

Object. 7. *Order and Government in the* Church, *or* National Religion, *cannot be preſerv'd without ſuch Guards upon both* Piety, Order, *and* Unity; *for beſides that Publick Authority hath thought them fit, there are many private Chriſtians* zealous *of them, and that would be* ſcandaliſed, *if they were taken away, as if the Precept of the* Apoſtle *were broken*, Let all things be done Decently, and in Order; *and of them greateſt care is to be had, as owning the Publique Authority moſt.*

Anſw. I have already aſſerted, in anſwer to ſome parts of this Objection;

1. That Religion and Piety are its own beſt Guards, and Devotion to God preſerv'd moſt awful, as well as moſt pure, in its own *Spirituality* and *Truth*.

2. That all Natural and Neceſſary Order and Decency, are always to be ſecured, as much as may be, as being above the *Scale* of *meer Indifferents*.

3. That Unity is to be preſerv'd in the *Inviolate love of Chriſtians to one another*, center'd in thoſe principal Things

Things, *Love of God and Christ*, and *keeping his Commandments*; and not *in one Face of Uniformity*; which is, if plac'd upon *Ceremonials*, in its own Nature, as variable as the *Phaſe of the Moon*.

4. I add, The more Publick Societies in Religion are intended, and deſired to be, the more Comprehenſive the Forms of Union muſt be. The Prudence, and holy Caution, of that firſt *Council* we read of in the *Chriſtian Church*, is always to be followed: When the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were to come into the neareſt Union, and as great an *Uniformity*, as was any way neceſſary, either in the *ſeveral Churches*, or the *whole Church*; when Doubts and Diſputes had ariſen concerning the Terms of their Union, was that prime *Canon* made, (happy had it been, if that Pattern had been ever ſince kept to) *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us, to lay upon you no other Burden, than Theſe neceſſary Things*; *one neceſſary* by a *perpetual Morality*, *one other* in the fear and danger of *Idolatry*, or *Scandal*: The other two *neceſſary* at that time, but by alteration of Time they dropp'd off, as to any Religious Import; except as general Nature may check at them.

5. The Banding of Societies in unneceſſary Rites, is rather of Eccleſiaſtick Intereſt and Domination, than of the Concerns of *Chriſtian Religion*.

6. If there are ſuch Varieties, that ſome cannot ſerve God, without adorning their Worſhip with theſe *Arbitrary Rites* of *Order* and *Decency*, they muſt *ſtand or fall to their own Maſter*: If they *have ſuch a Faith*, ſeeing the Danger of *Scandaliſing* lies moſt on the ſide of Ceremonies, they are thoſe that ſhould *have it to themſelves before God*, not they that *doubt*; or, becauſe it is the Publickly Eſtabliſhed Order, they ſhould carry the *Happineſs*, the *Priviledge* of their *full Perſwaſion* humbly, and compaſſionately, being not *high minded*, but *fearing*, leſt in ſome parts of that, wherein they ſeem ſo clear, Cauſes of Condemning them

themſelves lye hid at preſent, and afterwards ſtart out.

But all this cannot be a Standard for others; they that are *doubtful* ought not to be ſcrewed up, by Engines and Pullies, to this *Happineſs*: Seeing then there are ſome that dare not ſerve God in this way, we muſt ſeek out other Terms of Union, and they are very near us; the vital Union of Chriſtianity, our National Reformed Religion, which may ſubſiſt well enough, if we would let it, in theſe leſſer Diſtinctions.

It did not make *diverſe Churches* in *Primitive Rome*, that ſome Chriſtians diſtinguiſhed *Meats* and *Days*, and others did not.

Yet the aſſerting the Rights of the Goſpel-Freedom from *Judaick Bondage*, was of more concernment to the *Chriſtian Church*, at that time, than all the *Order* and *Decency* of *Deſpotick Ceremonies* can be worth to it now.

Let us therefore, as the Concluſion of this Head of *Scandal*, always remember, upon the point of Indifferency, That, *All that it is, hath been nam'd already, and it is known to be Indifferency, and it may not contend with Scandal, that is mightier than it*; for *Scandal* is *Scandal*, real Miſchief, and lays about it from every Quarter with Miſchiefs. How much better then is it, that *indifferent* things in Religion were taken away, even *while the World ſtandeth*, than that they ſhould be kept up as the Sconces of *Scandal*?

For *Indifferent Things* let not the *Work of God be deſtroyed, nor any for whom Chriſt dyed in danger to Periſh*; the more we eſteem *our Church, our Religion, our Worſhip of God*, the better and purer they are, the more it is pity any ſhould be divided from it, ſhould be ſo far ſcandaliſed, as to be *Schiſmaticks* from it, either in our account, or if it be *that Sin*, in the real danger of it, and of *periſhing* in it. The more excellent our *Church* is, the more the *Apoſtles* Rules take hold of us. Let not the *good of our Church*

be evil ſpoken of, as if it was *Ceremonial*; Let us not loſe any from *our Church*, for *Meat and Drink*: Increaſe not the *Woe of Scandal* any way, for ſo mean Things, as *Indifferents*.

Let us not indanger our ſelves into the *Woe of him*, by whom *Scandal comes*, for *Elements*.

But beſides all theſe Conſiderations, there is not ſo abſolute a ſecurity in *adding any thing*, under any Name whatever, to the *pure Worſhip of God*, any more than to his *Word, leſt we be found Lyars to him*, miſmatching with it, what will not endure *the Fire. Greateſt Peace have they that love thy Law, O Lord*, and that only; *nothing ſhall offend them, in nothing will they offend others.* Obſerving Rites that had been *Divine*, was not ſo ſafe to the firſt Chriſtians, having to do with Rites that had been corrupted *Idolatrouſly*, and Superſtitiouſly, proved very Fatal. *Ceremonies* are but *Shaddows*, Superſtition eaſily pervades that *little thin Eſſence they have*: They have not the *Right* of being *Gods Creation* to bring them off, to lye lower than their Corruption, and commend them: There is no ſuch Cauſe to be over-zealous of ſuch things, in regard of which, a late * *Romaniſt* hath ſaid, *The true Religion of the Church of* England, *differs little from the* Romiſh, *in outward appearance.*

Prov. 30.5, 6.

* *Father* Simmons's *Critical Hiſtory.*

The Argument ſtrikes all ways, if our Conſtitution be ſo good, and injur'd not at all by *Ceremonies*, let us, as Chriſt, *Seek, and ſave that which is loſt*; thoſe we look upon, as *the leaſt, that believe in Chriſt*, let them not be loſt for *Ceremonies.* The Love and Compaſſion of a Saviour, triumphs towards *theſe leaſt*, eaſily Offended, narrow-ſoul'd, moroſe, ſuppoſe them; *Smoaking Flax, bruiſed Reeds*, yet *deſpiſe them not*, if *Chriſtians*, if *Proteſtants. Their Angels behold the Face of the Father, of Chriſt in Heaven.* Let them not be *Offended, Scandaliſed* from Union with our *National Church* for *Ceremonies.*

If

If on the other ſide, our Ceremonies in Gods account ſhould be blemiſhes of our *Church*, and Imperfections; or if they may be turned into ſuch by an ignorant uſe of them, or if they *cauſe Diviſions* and *Scandals*; if the Miſchiefs *of thoſe Scandals* fall upon Strangers to true Religion, and keep them at diſtance: All theſe conſiderations weigh heavy againſt a *Zeal* for them.

But if none of theſe can be laid to their Charge; yet if Men doubt concerning them, what muſt they do? How ſhall they eſcape that of the Apoſtle? *He that doubteth is Damned if he Eats. Whatever is not of Faith is Sin.* Why ſhould this be hazzarded for *Indifferents?* And when the Tyde of Advantages, Preferments, Publick Approbation, are on one ſide; Deprivation of all thoſe, Cenſures and Penalties on the other; who dares anſwer for many Men, that they do not offer Violence to their Principles, much more venture over their Doubts? And yet in thoſe very Doubts has the *Apoſtle* laid his Doctrine.

Or Laſtly, We can reaſonably ſuppoſe, Men would ſtem this Tyde that is againſt them, if they had not real Conſcientious Doubts, or higher than Doubts, to conteſt with in prejudice of their Complyance.

Upon the whole then, I cannot but conclude, Impoſing Indifferent Things in Religion, by a violent Example; much more by ſevere Ways, is very contrary to the Apoſtles Doctrine in that Caſe; and that upon Reaſons, that till I ſee them anſwered, I muſt ſuppoſe unanſwerable.

I have now thus far diſcourſed of *Scandal* in the more ſtrict, and particular Caſes, Scripture hath given us the notices of; but in the remaining Heads to be treated of, I ſhall conſider it in that largeſt and moſt comprehenſive Graſp of it, *Religion in general.*

And there is nothing that requires greater Wiſdom, and the prepoſſeſſions of a more Religious Prudence, than to ſit, and *count the Charge* of undertaking ſerious Piety, as

the Lord hath bidden us in relation to one Branch of *Scandal, Perſecution*; ſo with reſpect to the whole Negotiation of *Scandal* in the World.

It is the great both Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in the Scripture, that he hath given full and ample warning before-hand, of all the Diſadvantages we are to encounter in our *Faith, Love*, and *Obedience* to him; as when we are aſſured, There ſhall be *Falſe Prophets, There muſt be Hereſies, There ſhall be Perſecution, There ſhall be an Apoſtacy*, or general Defection from *True Symmetral Chriſtianity*, within *Chriſtianity it ſelf*: And ſo in the preſent Caſe, it muſt needs be that *Scandals come*. For the Knowledge of theſe things is one greateſt Defence againſt the Evil predicted, as alſo againſt the ſtaggering of our Minds, concerning the Truth of Religion it ſelf.

Let anyman then enquire, and ſearch this thing out, both in Scripture and cloſe Reaſon, and he will find *Scandals muſt come*; though he may at firſt think, Religion, if it be ſo great and excellent as is given out of it, ſhould not be darkned and clouded with *Scandal*, but ſtand clear from it; and it be impoſſible it ſhould be any way liable to it.

Now that it is in it ſelf Juſt and Right, even to *Perfection it ſelf*, is every where recorded and publiſhed of it.

Prov. 8. 6. *Wiſdom ſpeaks excellent things, and the opening its Lips are Right Things: It ſpeaketh Truth, and Wickedneſs is an abomination to its Lips: All its Words are in Righteouſneſs, and nothing froward or perverſe in them: They are all plain to him that underſtandeth, and right to them that find Knowledge. The Righteouſneſs of thy Teſtimonies is everlaſting, give me Underſtanding and I ſhall live. Gods Precepts are*

Pſal. 119. 104. &c. *right concerning All Things, and ſecure from every Falſe Way. His Law is the Truth. By the Word of his Lips Men are*

Pſal. 17. 4. Hoſ. 14. 11. *kept from the Paths of the Deſtroyer.* Amidſt all the *ſcandaliſing*, and intangling *Works of Men, The Ways of the Lord*

Lord are all right, if Men have but *right Feet*, right Intentions, Affections, and Motions. And yet when all this is granted, let any Man caſt the thing in his ſevereſt Thoughts, and he will find it impoſſible, as things are, Religion ſhould be free from *Scandal*, and that therefore, as if any Man cannot deny himſelf, he cannot be Chriſt's Diſciple, ſo if any Man cannot Encounter *Scandal*, and *overcome*, he cannot be the *Servant of God*, the *Diſciple of Chriſt*.

Let us then reſume the Notion of *Scandal*, and fit it to this general Proſpect over Religion, I am now upon, and we ſhall find, as the *Lord ſpeaks*, that *Scandals muſt come*.

Scandal then is any Falſe Pretence or Appearance, whereby Religion, or any of the nobler Objects, Parts, Rules, or Reaſons of it, are expos'd to Diſadvantage and Diſguſt, as unreaſonable, unjuſt, untrue, weak and empty; moroſe, unlovely, and undeſirable; or the contrary, Sin, Irreligion, and Diſobedience to God are gloſs'd over, and preſented, as in all regards, more chooſable, and to be deſired than Religion; and all things ſo intangled and perplex'd among themſelves, that Men are ſeduc'd from the eſteem of the Divine Law, and Obedience to it, and inſnar'd in Sin; even by that juſtle, and diſorder *Scandal* makes in the ſeveral Laws and Rules of Religion among themſelves; and the blending with them the pretences of Sin; upon which great diſhonour to God and Religion, ſharp Conflicts of Conſcience within it ſelf, Miſchief to the Souls of Men, and a general Diſ-affection to Religion enſues.

And now, how this muſt needs be, I ſhall undertake to ſhew, having only obſerved; Firſt,

That there are ſome main Things ſo neceſſary for our Knowledge, Faith, and Practice, that they are made exquiſitely clear, and moſt eaſie to be underſtood. *He that*

that runs, may read them; wayfaring Men, though Fools, cannot err therein; the entrance of the Word of God, concerning them, *giveth Light, it giveth understanding to the Simple.*

Again, There are some Things of very great advancement to the Soul, and its Happiness, that are the reward of a holy, humble diligence to *know,* in such a Measure, as they *ought* to be known, and of a preceeding Obedience in those so plain things, that (as the *Resurrection of Christ*) are not *shewn to all the People,* but to *chosen Witnesses*: Thus *the secret of the Lord* is with *them that fear him,* and he will shew *them his Covenant: What Man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way, that he shall chuse: The Meek will he guide in Judgment; and the Meek will he teach his way. If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of my Doctrine, whether it be of God, or not*: On the other side Ignorance, and Disobedience to those Divine Truths, that are nearest, and most plain to us, are punished, either with concealment of, or leaving us to Injudiciousness, and Insensibleness, in higher Divine Manifestations; where also that Injudiciousness and Insensibleness are Condemned. *For to him that hath shall be given,* and *from him that hath not,* by improvement and good use, *shall be taken away, even that which he hath*: And *this is the Condemnation for not believing in Christ (that supernatural Revelation) because they loved Darkness rather than Light,* as a Cover for *their Evil deeds.*

Psal. 25. 12, 14, &c.

John 7. 17.

Luke 8. 18.

John 3. 19.

But besides those plain Truths, written with a Sunbeam in Nature it self, besides those of *clear Revelation,* there are necessarily some deep Truths, concerning the Divine Nature, the Attributes of God, his Decrees, and Acts, some Mysteries of Christ, of Providence, and the Government of the World, that command Awe, Reverence, and Modesty, and are not to be fathom'd and fully understood, and yet cannot be so divided, nor separated from those

Truths

Truths that are neceſſary to be known; but that the Underſtanding muſt, and ought to have an obſervation of, and ſearch after them; though with *Fear* and *Trembling*, and with a *Wiſdom* to *Sobriety*, yet to know as much of them, as it is *made to know* by Scripture.

Theſe things now being premiſed, I come to ſhew, That in the firſt and beſt ſtate of Things, *Scandals might come*; and that in the corrupt and degenerate ſtate they *muſt come*.

And firſt how they *might come*; and there muſt the ſame Original be aſſigned to *Scandal*, as there is to Evil and Sin it ſelf; for neither Sin nor *Scandal* can derive themſelves from the *Holy*, *Wiſe*, and *Good Creator*, who made all Things juſt and even; *He*, *moſt upright*, *weighed out the Path of the Juſt by his* own *Eternal Perfect Way*, and made the Angelical, and Humane, the whole Rational Nature, according to it, *upright* and *perfect*, ſo that there was no *Scandal* from this firſt beginning of Things. But when God made Creatures of Reaſon and Underſtanding, and of Free Will and Choice; Underſtanding in the very Nature of it could ſearch and pry, and range every way; and look not only upon Things that are, but by Things that are, they could collect Things poſſible; from the Nature of Wiſe, Good, and Juſt, they could deſcry Folly, Evil and Wrong; and in Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs, they could behold, as in privation from them, Miſery and Unhappineſs, or the Tranſcendency and Infiniteneſs of Happineſs; and the Degrees below it; they could trace and find out the Lines by which there roſe up a Supremacy of theſe, and back again, by which there was Declination of Degrees from this *Azimuth*, or inſuperable Height.

And as theſe Underſtandings are ſo great, ſo they are ſuited with Wills and Appetites as great, by which they could aſpire to be whatever they ſaw above themſelves; and to diſlike in whatever they found themſelves below.

So

So that it was possible for them to dislike their *first Estates*, to forsake their proper *Mansions* or Habitations, and leave them, as if they were not loughty, large, and roomthy enough for them. Thus the *Angels* left their *Estate* in Heaven, and *Adam* his in *Paradise*, aspiring to something higher; and this through mutability, from misapprehension, jealousie, and disgust, arising from perfect mistake, false appearance, and mis-judging, which is perfect *Scandal*. Thus not being Infinite, not being Omniscient, nor able *to find out the Almighty to perfection*, nor resting in the Love and Obedience of God in those things most certain, evident, and undoubted to them, but projecting beyond their own Sphere, they might come to *charge* Gods Holiness, Goodness, and Wisdom *foolishly*; to raise suspitions they were not high and well enough; observing how Evil lay from Good, they might in Discontent draw the Line of Evil upon Good, and *charge* Imperfection upon Perfection it self; they might disorder the most orderly Alliances, and confuse the just Distances between Things and Things.

This they might possibly do, except God did interpose with his Immutability of Perfection for them, and secure them: But God permitting things to liberty, this must be possible to fall out.

This possibility of Change was the *Folly* God *charged* the purest *Angels* with, and in regard of which, *the Heavens were not clean in his sight.*

From the miserable Consequences of this Possibility coming into actual Event, the *Good Angels* were *Elected*, and into them the *Bad Angels* fell, who *abode not in the Truth*, but fell into *cursed Scandal*, and are wrapped up in *Scandal*, fettered in it, even in *Chains of darkness*, which are Chains of *Scandal*, till the *Judgment of the great day*; that it may then be decided, whether they had just cause of *Offence* or not: Thus the Devil was *a Lyar from the beginning*,

Jude 6.

ning, and the *Father of* it, of the *Lye of Scandal*: For all *Scandal* is *a Lye*, *John* 8. 44.

And now, when there was an actual Fall, a Defection of any of the Rational Creatures, actually come to pass, God still permitting things to their own Liberty, then it cannot be, but that *Scandals come*; For when once the Activity of an Understanding, carried with a perverse and disorderly Will, is in motion, then it traverses all ways, cuts all those Lines of Allyance and Connexion betwixt Things and Things, scales the heights, dives down into the bottom, fills all things with Confusion and Perplexity, that it may *Scandalise*, mis-represent, and mis-report God, and Supream Goodness, extols forbidden Pleasures and Enjoyments, and an imaginary Happiness, as if enviously denied, and that denial unreasonably, and to no benefit complyed with.

And the more Agents there are thus perverted, and ill disposed, the more *Scandals* must needs arise and shew themselves; when therefore Angels fell, or if some Principal fell first, there must needs be *Scandals* in motion from them, and they drew down innumerable *lesser Stars* with them; when they propagated *Scandal* to Men, as we read in the History of the *Fall*, and Men grew numerous and wicked, *Scandals* must needs come amain, and multiply themselves: For so many sinful and impure Understandings at work, and hurried on by extreamly bad and unholy Wills, *Scandals* must become like a Deluge, and cannot but increase to a kind of Infinite, and must be pressing every where; for there is no Light so clear, but a dim and dark Eye may report it black and obscure, there is no way so smooth and even, but *Lame Legs*, *Crooked Feet*, being themselves unequal, may *stumble* and *fall in it*: When a Man, as *Solomon says*, is cast *into a Net by his own Feet*; when his *Feet* are a *Net* to themselves, he must be *Scandalised*, and Catch'd wherever he goes. There is no Sense so

grave, and ſeriouſly compos'd, but a vain Fancy, that is full of odd and antick Shapes and Images within it ſelf, may traveſtee, and turn it into Ridicule. Even the plaineſt Senſe, by Ignorance, or Malice, may be ſo tranſpos'd, as to be made moſt unintelligible Non-ſenſe, and by ſeparating the parts from their due order one to another, may be perverted into Falſhood and Blaſphemy.

Thus therefore, by the Darkneſs of Mens minds, by the Maliciouſneſs and ill Deſigns of corrupted Intellectuals, enraged by impure Luſts and Paſſions, the plaineſt things in Religion may be miſ-underſtood, miſ-repreſented, miſ-reported, and diſguiſed out of themſelves; much more the more ſecret, retir'd, and even unfathomable parts of Divine Truth, Providence, and Government.

God hath made every thing good, that he hath made, and his very permiſſions of Evil, are all over-ruled by him to Good; and even to us they may be Medicinal, and of uſe, if taken by the right Handle.

On the other ſide, *Scandal* turns the very beſt things into Evil, to the Perſon *Offended*, and nothing can be ſo Good, that it doth not ſo abuſe: The *Spies* it ſends out upon the *Land* of *Promiſe*, bring up an *ill Report of it.*

Indifferent Things, that are by God prepared, and intended to turn each way, either to uſe or not to uſe, according as Circumſtances lead, and both ways to be advantages for Good, *Scandal* hath a great hand over, and turns them to Evil all ways.

Things that are Evil, the Sins, and Falls of Men, either Good Men, or Bad Men, or Men ſeemingly Good, and inwardly Bad, are as the proper Dominion and Territory of *Scandal*, and it raiſes what it can againſt Religion by them.

Thus every thing, by the not only Permiſſion, but Juſtice of God upon the faln World, is ſubjected to *Scandal*, not *willingly*, for *all things work together for good*, as they

are

are impreſſed with Motion from the Divine Hand; but deſerted by that, but ſo much as permiſſively, *Scandal* violently tranſports them upon Evil.

Now things ſtanding thus, there is the *God of Scandal* and *his Angels*, *the Angels of Scandal*; the *Divel*, and the whole *Hoaſt of faln Spirits*; the Great Reaſons, and Wits of this World, the Prophets of *Scandal*; the Ambitious Powers, and Intereſts of Worldly Greatneſs, Secular Policy, Eccleſiaſtical Domination, Debauched Religion, and in one word, the whole Univerſe of Luſts, all at the ſervice of *Scandal*, and employed by it.

From hence are all thoſe Atheiſtick Diſcourſes, thoſe Heretical Opinions, thoſe Monſtrous Idolatries and Superſtitions; thoſe Burleſques of *Lucian* Wits, thoſe Bold and Authoritative Examples of general Wickedneſs, Prophaneneſs, and Irreligion, that have ſpread themſelves over the whole Earth, thoſe Severities in matters of Indifferency.

And where there is in any Time, or Place, ſuch a ſenſe of Truth and Religion, that any of theſe Evils, plain and bare-faced, take very little, but are hated and hooted at, every thing, that is better, is borrowed againſt it ſelf, the Mantle of Law and Right is put on, pretences of Religion are made the Rayment of things moſt contrary to it And in all times, True Religion, Piety and Vertue expulſed under the worſt Names, and covered with the ugly Vizor of Evil; it being hard to bring Goodneſs into miſ-repute in its own likeneſs, under its own appearance.

To this purpoſe, beſides every Man being the firſt and worſt *Scandaliſer* to himſelf, beſides the lower and leſſer Miniſteries of *Scandal*, within privater Communities, there are in all Times and Places, the publick Councels of *Scandal*, and the Cabals of it, that are neither Idle, nor Lukewarm, but purſuing all things to the utmoſt.

And the *Men of this World* are always greedy of *Scandal*, of receiving it, either through miserable Ignorance, and Inapprehensiveness, or from Propensions of their own, and to serve their particular Occasions; or as they embark their Interests in the Bottom of a *Common Scandal*, as most safe, and of the richest Return: or if it were no more, they are always so near of Kin to Degeneracy, and Depravedness.

Now lay all these together, and we may easily find, *Scandals must come*, not only *lesser Scandals*, but greatest and most prevailing ones, that do as it were sweep the World before them.

If any thing therefore can be added to *Scandal*, it will be, we must expect it; though there hath been so much done upon it to improve it, and especially since the Rising, Progress, and yet surviving Contest of the *Western Antichristianisme*. And whether there may be yet a Reserve in the Counsels of God for *Scandal*, before its Final Abolition, to unite and summon all its Strength, and become in a sort *Oecumenical*; I mean the *Scandal of Antichristianism* especially; these latter Days must discover.

In the mean time I will not be afraid to say, There is a very horrible *Scandal* rising at this very time, even a *Protestant Popery*, placing such an absolute Dependence upon Succession from the *Apostles* (without cautioning for any thing of their true Spirit) and which so hangs Salvation at the Girdle of those that would be their Successours, as turns Christianity into a most *Arbitrary* and *Tirannick Party*.

But they that know the Scriptures, know assuredly, Christ hath founded no Rule, Government, or Authority in his Church, whatever, but whose whole display of it self is in Teaching, Instructing according to his Word: If that be not clear and evident, the whole Authority and Power falls to the Ground. This Word appearing in and with

with it ſelf, though by the Miniſters of it, hath the ſole Power over Conſcience: They that would Rule without this, as Rulers appointed by Chriſt in his Church, are but *Lay-Elders*, *Lay-Biſhops*, or indeed *they leave the Word of God, and ſerve Tables.*

But in this Univerſal Rage of *Scandal*, God hath not ſo forſaken the World, but that his *Spirit lifts up a Standard againſt it.*

Evil is not Infinite, but is at all times ſtopp'd by Evidences of God, and true Goodneſs environing it on every ſide, and bounding it, that it cannot do what it has a mind to do, and is therefore forced to leave it undone; for it can go no farther than the Beings that carry it can go, and God is always above them, and hems them in on every ſide.

Scandal hath only a permiſſion from God, a Diſpenſation to manifeſt it ſelf; it is always ſubject to Truth, as Night is to Day: It is ſubject to be reduc'd, and contracted, as God pleaſes.

And thus have I finiſhed the Third Head of Diſcourſe concerning *Scandal, It muſt needs be that Scandals come.*

I come to a brief Diſpatch of the Fourth Head, The Demonſtration of the *World's Woe* becauſe of *Scandal.*

1. Let the *Scandal* be never ſo fair and plauſible in its Pretence, or Reaſons of Seduction from God and our Duty, there is ſo great a Force of Truth and Higher Reaſon againſt it, that our Guilt and Condemnation is unavoidable in not reſiſting the Temptation: Nothing can juſtifie a Plea againſt the *Divine Law*, not an *Angel from Heaven*; we muſt pronounce *Anathema* upon him, if he undertakes it. There are ſuch Foundations of Truth laid by God, that cannot be moved; and they have ſuch Evidence and Aſſurance to all ſincere Minds, that there is no excuſe againſt the Guilt of being taken with *Scandal.*

2. There

2. There is therefore always ſome moſt Guilty Cauſe of *Scandal*, and its prevalency within every Man that is taken by it: Some Luſt and love of Evil that betrays him, and on which he is condemned. When *Scandal* rages moſt abroad, and comes with *lying Signs* and *Wonders*, and *with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs*, it is becauſe Men *have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, and receive not the *Truth in the love of it*.

3. *Scandal* is it ſelf Miſery and Ruine: A Man cannot *fall*, and be *ſnared*, he cannot be *wounded* and *broken*, but he muſt be miſerable. Life, Health, Salvation are only in Obedience to God, and Conformity to his holy Will. *Who hath Woe? Who hath Wounds? Who hath Grief?* But he that hath received *Scandal* againſt the Divine Truth. This *is a deep Ditch, he only that is hated of God falleth into it*, as not to recover. It is vain to pretend the Force, the Power, the unavoidableneſs of *Scandal*, when it ſelf is Death and Ruine: How many are pleaſed with their *Scandals*, and will by no means part with them? Many excuſe themſelves, they could not withſtand their Deceipt and Violence, and will not apprehend their Caſe. The firſt cloſely embrace Death, or, as *Solomon* ſays, *love Death*. The latter can have no other Pity at the higheſt, but that they are undone; their *Scandals are upon them, and they pine away in them*, as they ſpeak in *Ezekiel*, *and how then ſhould they live? God hath no pleaſure in their death*, yet ſtill they dye, except reſtor'd by Repentance.

Ezek. 33. 10.

4. Were it not for Scandal, were it not ſome unhappy and miſchievous miſ-repreſentation of Divine Goodneſs and Truth, were there not ſomething that impoſed upon the Underſtanding, and ſeduced the Will, with a falſe appearance of Truth and Good, Rational Beings could not reſiſt Truth, nor fall out with Infinite Goodneſs; or on the other ſide, entertain Falſhood, or fall in love with Evil, and ſo would be every way ſecure from Deſtruction: Surely, were

were it not for *Scandal*, ſome moſt miſchievous poſſeſſion upon our Minds, while there are any hopes of Mercy, we could not refuſe and reject it, nor cleave ſo faſt to ſin and death, which can have no deſirableneſs, but to the *deceived Soul*; as Holineſs and the Favour of God cannot be diſguſtful to any, but the *Scandaliſed*: Were it not for ſome indiſſolvable *Scandal*, even the ſin againſt the *Holy Spirit* might be repented of, and forgiven; ſome irreconcileable prejudice *retains* both the *ſin* and ſo the *puniſhment*. And in Hell there is that *Eternal Scandal* for ever holding faſt the Damned, That a Creature deprived of God juſtly hate and rebel againſt him: Or it is beſt for it in that Circumſtance ſo to do. Were it poſſible to be looſed from this *Snare of Death*, this *Everlaſting Chain of Darkneſs*, there might be an eſcape out of Hell it ſelf: Were there not an Eternal Diſcontent and Diſguſt to God, Hell could not be Hell, nor Devils Devils any longer; ſo miſerable a thing is *Scandal*.

The fifth Head in this Diſcourſe is *the accumulative Woe to him by whom Scandal cometh*; the *Woe* by way of Tranſcendency.

1. The Deſigners of Scandal muſt be as ſo many *Satans* in the World, of the juſt contrary Spirit and Action to God and Chriſt, and the Holy Spirit in the World; and therefore ſhall be for ever ſeparated from that Bleſſed Preſence, into *that Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; the *God*, and *the Angels* of *Scandal*.

Some have in all Ages been brandedly infamous herein, but none like him, *whoſe coming is after Satan, with lying Signs and Wonders, and all deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs*.

All thoſe Atheiſtical Defamations of God, and Religion, and the Scurrilities of Prophane Wits, are deeply dyed in this Guilt. They are like the throwing *of Firebrands, Arrows*, and *Death*; *ſo is the Scandaliſing of Men in ſuch ſports of Wit, to their Ruine*.

They

They that offer themſelves, as Coppies and Patterns of Wickedneſs, in defiance of Heaven, dwell near to this *inſupportable Woe.*

They, whoſe Laws Armed with cruel Penalties, are ſo many deſtructive Traps, and Engins of Miſchief, againſt all that are Profeſſors of true and ſincere Religion, ſhall be gathered out of Gods Kingdom, their *Scandals*, and *themſelves, that work iniquity by them.*

They that in *Indifferent Things*, that they themſelves acknowledge *Indifferent*, uſe a violent Example, that muſt be anſwered with Conformity, though Men do with greateſt Seriouſneſs and Solemnity proteſt their *Doubt* in the Caſe, and though *Scandal* be planted every where in their *Indifferencies*, had need, as our Saviour bids them, *take heed*, they *offend not*, they *deſpiſe not*, though they ſhould be but the *Little ones in Chriſtianity.*

Let them *ſit down*, and *count their danger, a Milſtone about their Necks*, and the *bottom of the Sea*, is ſafer in our Lords Judgment of the Caſe.

Wherever the *Inſtruments of Cruelty* are in any *Habitations*, upon the account of leſſer Differences in Religion, *Oh my Soul come not thou into their Secret: Oh my Honour be not thou united to their Aſſembly: In their Anger they dig down Walls of Defence and Security to Religion, Proteſtant Religion: Unhappy, very unhappy is their Anger, for it is fierce, and their Wrath, for it is cruel: They divide* Jacob, *and ſcatter* Iſrael.

2. They that are the Authors of *Scandal*, by their great Miſtakes in Religion, by their unhappy and miſerable Falls into Sin, by their involving others in their own Sin, without conſidering the ſad Conſequence and End of both; they have this great Aggravation of Guilt, that *Scandal, Miſchief*, and *Death*, have ſpread from them, and faln as a *Snare* upon others.

Their

Yet their Guilt is measured by the proportion of the *Scandal* in its own Nature, the malignancy of the Intention, the stupid, or seared carelesness of the Event, but not by the Event it self; whether the *Scandal* prevail upon others, or not; or whether they that are Scandalised, repent, or not.

Because the Guilt of the Scandalised is reckon'd to him, by his own Degrees of Light, his circumstances of defence against, or extream danger of falling into the temptation, by his own love of Sin, or enmity against the *Divine Law*, in which every Man is the principal *Scandaliser* to himself; and his recovery out of the *Scandal*, depends upon his own Repentance, or Obduracy against the means of Repentance.

The Guilt of the *Scandaliser* is measured also, by his own state in Sin in general, his state in relation to that Sin of *Scandalising*, his Continuance in it, or Repentance from it, and not by what befalls the *Scandalised*; else the *Apostle Paul's Salvation* had been hopeless, without the certain Repentance of all those *he compelled to Blaspheme*.

Repentance, and Faith in Jesus Christ, and the Mercy of God in him, are the only means of recovery out of this *Snare of Death*, both to the *Scandaliser*, or *Scandalised*, and a certain means it is to either.

Before I come to the last Head of this Discourse, *viz.* to draw down the whole Meditation so, as that it may be most fitted to Practice, I will endeavour to resume the whole diffusive Notion of *Scandal* into one Uniform Representation, descending from the General into the Particulars of it.

Original Scandal is that dislike, and exception, the Rational Creature took to the Creator's Supream dispose over it, and its disgust to that State wherein infinite Wisdom and Goodness had placed it; so that instead of a thankful acquiescency in it, to its happiness; it hath proved a Fugitive and a Vagabond from it, to its Ruine.

Reaſon of this at firſt there could be none, but a diſdain to have its large Capacities of Underſtanding confined, or dictated to, or its Freeborn ἀνυπεύθυνον bridled, or reſtrained, its Liberty of Will manacled, or fettered by a Divine Law: As if it were not indeed greateſt Underſtanding to be conformed with Truth; and nobleſt Liberty, to adhere to Infinite Goodneſs; or as if Underſtanding were not Underſtanding, if it could not take meaſures of Truth for it ſelf without God Authoritatively ſuperintending it; nor Free-will be Free, if it could not chuſe wholly for it ſelf, and owe no account to God.

And whether this *Scandal* is firſt in the Underſtanding, or Will, is not material; for the Union is ſo Vital between them both, that what is in one, is at the ſame time, and as they ſay, *ipſo facto*, in the other.

John. 8. 44. The Devil at the ſame time he *abode not in the Truth*, had, as *our Saviour* tells us, ſwelling *Luſts* in his Will, ſuitable to his Prevarication from the Truth.

The very ſame may be obſerved in the fall of *Adam*, there was in one Act a deception upon his Underſtanding, deſerting Truth, a ſenſual Eye upon the Fair, but *forbidden Fruit*, and the Luſts of the Mind aſpiring to an imaginary more mounted condition, than God had placed him in, to be *as Gods knowing Good and Evil.* Gen. 3. 6.

This then is the firſt great *Scandal*, at which the *Angels* and *Adam* fell, a diſcontent at a ſtate of Obedience, and Subjection to God, and his Commands, how *Holy*, *Juſt*, and *Good* ſoever; as if it were too Arbitrary upon Beings, that could underſtand and chuſe for themſelves, to be ſo limitted.

They did not *like* to conſider, to *retain* upon their Reaſons, not only that they had their Beings given them, and that their Obedience was an abſolute Due to the Creator, but that it was Obedience to an Infinitely *Good* and *Faithful Creator*, truer to the Intereſt of his Creatures, than

than themſelves could be: This *Scandal* therefore prevailing upon them, drew along the whole Tain of miſery with it.

Scandaliſed Spirits always report ill of God and his Laws, ſo far as they are *Scandaliſed*, and they that are entering into *Scandal*, too contentedly hear ill of him, as appears in the Dialogue betwixt the *Serpent*, and the *Firſt Man and Woman*.

Spirits utterly loſt by *Scandal*, act in defiance of God, and are the more enraged by finding the Miſery of their *Scandal* preſſing upon them, even to deſpair, as we ſee in the *Devils*. Humane Nature, is more modeſt and tender, being ſuccoured by Grace, and the *promiſed Seed*, in our firſt Parents: and their Poſterity preſerved from the utmoſt miſchief of *Scandal*, by that Great Reſtorer from *Scandal*; Not perfectly recovered, but in a ſtate of ſecond Probation, of riſing after ſo great a Fall, or being moſt unhappily again ſunk below thoſe hopes, and made for ever the prey of *Scandal*, even after Grace offered.

This State of Humane Nature is waved, and various. In ſome things Men are more clear and free, in others hooked, and ſtaked with *Scandal*; and wherein they are Right in the Generals, they are often inſnared in the Particulars, and ſo that their freedom in the one, giving them more room and ſpace to ſtir, inwraps them more in the *Scandal* of the other. By degrees, if not reſtor'd, men loſe the modeſty and tenderneſs preſerv'd to them by Grace, and fall into the very *Scandal* of the Devils themſelves, or very near to it.

However in all *Scandal* there are ſome of the Lineaments of Primitive *Scandal*; and the greater the *Scandal*, the more, and the more apparent, are thoſe ſtrokes of the firſt *Scandal*.

There is in every *Scandal* an Underſtanding that will be wiſer than God is for it, a diſguſt to ſelf Reſignation into the Divine Will.

There is ſome Luſt that clouds and darkens the Mind and there is ſome falſe Principle that imboldens Luſt.

Scandal always wraps up ſin with it ſelf, elſe it were not *Scandal*; ſin hath always *Scandal* to introduce it, elſe there could be no ſin: Although therefore, when we come to particular Caſes, there are many ſins lye wholly naked, and uncovered of any pretence, according to acknowledged Principles of Natural Religion, and the Word of God, yet they are not without the Shelter of ſome *Scandal*, and if they are driven out of all elſe, they yet retire under this; It is an undeſirable ſtate for a free-born Underſtanding and Will to be under Subjection; there is ſomething Tyrannick and Oppreſſive in it, that they may not know and chuſe what is beſt for themſelves; and ſo there is a reſolvedneſs in corrupt Nature to do whatever *goes out of its own Mouth.*

Rom. 8. 7. The *Apoſtle* obſerves, *The Carnal Mind is Enmity to the Law of God, it is not ſubject to it, neither indeed can be.* It is always *offended* at it, it always pretends ſome Cauſe againſt it, and, if there be no other, that it is too Arbitrary: A pretence, a ſhew of Reaſon, ſeems neceſſary to a Rational Mind and Will, that is ſo made under the power of Truth and Goodneſs, it cannot ſin, but by being deceived, and graſping at ſome forbidden, appearing Good. Hence even the Devils think their Caſe juſtifies an eternal quarrel againſt God, their Miſery is to them a juſt Cauſe. But the various Degrees, Kinds, and Shapes of *Scandal* are ſo many, ſo confuſed, ſo perplexing, that the very view of it would enforce a thinking Soul, to cry out, *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord*; as the *Patriarch Jacob*, in a Prophetick Proſpect upon *Dan*, out of whom ſome have fanſied *Antichriſt* ſhould ariſe, deſcribes him as one would deſcribe *Scandal*, and therefore near enough to *Antichriſt* that *Man of Scandal* and *Son of Perdition*, that yet will be as *Dan*, Judge over the Tribes of *Iſrael*.

Scandal is a *Serpent by the Way, an Adder in the Path*, that *biteth the Horſe heels, ſo that his Rider ſhall fall backward*; moſt miſchievous Ruine. Conſidering therefore the Danger, the Multitude of *Scandals*, *We wait for thy Salvation, O Lord.*

Scandals then in particular Perſons and Caſes are Infinite; but the more general may be reduced. In Perſons of no ſenſe, no true love to Religion.

1. To the almoſt Univerſal Inſolency of Wickedneſs in Humane Nature, bearing away with the force and authority of ſo bad Example, all before it. And if defended by Atheiſtick Boldneſs, *wicked men clap their hands among themſelves, and multiply words againſt God, they go in Company one with another*, and *fulfill*, or juſtifie and make good, *the judgment of the Ungodly. They drink ſcorning like Water*, and add *Rebellion to their ſin.* Job 43. 7.

2. To the Ignorance, Sottiſhneſs, and Unconcernedneſs in Religion of Vulgar Minds, which reſts under ſuch Shadows as theſe, God is Merciful and will not Damn his Creatures; All have their Faults, even the Beſt, the Wiſeſt, and the moſt Religious. There is more ado than needs, Religion drives Men out of their Wits.

3. To a Falſe, a Formal Religion, Damnable Hereſies, or a Superſtition in place of Religion, raging with great ſhew of Zeal, and Devotion againſt True Religion, which while men bloodily purſue *they think they do God good ſervice.*

From thoſe that are more ſerious in the True Religion, theſe *Scandals* eſpecially ariſe.

1. All Immoralities, impure Intereſt of Ambition, Pleaſure, or Coveteouſneſs are very *Offenſive*, and expoſe Religion both to Strangers, and even among themſelves, it being ſo very difficult, or almoſt impoſſible in this *Scandaliz'd* ſtate to ſever in our Cenſures Religion it ſelf, from the miſcarriages of thoſe that profeſs it; men will know the Religion, and not only the men by the *Fruits* they

bring

bring forth; though Religion be the first, and most severe, in condemning what ever is bad, and so should be judg'd only by it self.

2. The great and many, and sharp Differences among those, that are the Professors of Religion, made most remarkable by the high Feuds, and furious Rencounters that give sport to the Enemies of it, in traducing it, and every way enfeeble it among themselves, are great *Scandals*.

3. The strange Antipathy in Religious persons against permitting the due Liberty to Conscience in things indifferent, or in all things that are not expresly commanded, or forbidden by God, that men either upon the known Principles of Natural Religion, or their own Principles, and acknowledged Consequences from them, cannot deny; which is many ways destructive of the true power of Religion, wherever it takes, being the *Scandal* of acting against *Sense* or *Conscience*. The *Apostle*, as hath been shewn, so remarks upon, and is however a great discouragement to the entrances into, and loss of Reputation to the profession of it, by the Clashes between those that cannot comply because they *Doubt*, and those, that either will not believe them, when they say they *Doubt*, or think them not able to understand whether they *doubt*, or not; or would drive them against the expres Rule of the *Apostle*, though it be allowed they do *doubt*.

Thus I have described *Scandal*, in which the whole unconverted Nature of man is *Seated*, though some are deeper than others in it.

The very best men are under the Remains of it, and are never perfect from it, till in the state of *Just Spirits made perfect*, where *Scandal* cannot enter.

In Hell it remains for ever, even under the Convictions of *Everlasting punishment*.

There is an Eternal Dislike, and Discontent at, a *Reply* against God and his Government, as not worthy of love, and

and ſubmiſſive Reverence, but to be rebelled againſt, in the very midſt of thoſe Convictions: Could there be that humble deference ſo due to God, it would be Repentance and Recovery to Heaven.

And now the miſery of *Scandal* runs along with it: All Diſobedience to the Divine Commands, which are *Eternal Life*, is *Scandal* in the Deception firſt, and after falls down into the miſerable ſtate, in which it always remains, but never ends, expreſſed by *the Worm that never dies, the Fire never quenched, the weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth for ever.* Every one that *maketh*, and *he that receiveth the lye of Scandal* are *caſt* into *the Lake* that *burneth with Fire* and *Brimſtone*, which is *the ſecond Death*, but he that maketh that lye, ſinks deepeſt; for though they are ſo miſerable, ſo great a *Woe* is to them that receive it, yet ſtill *Woe* in an Eminency *to him by whom Scandal cometh*, hath been pronounced by the *Lord*, and cannot be reverſed.

And now I am more immediately, and nearly, to fall upon what concerns us in a way of Practice, from the conſideration of *Scandal*.

1. Let us ſeriouſly apprehend the great Folly of taking hold of *Scandal*, and making advantage of it againſt any of the Rules, and Laws of Religion: It is no other, than ſucking in a Common Infection, or Contagion, becauſe it is common, or taking into our ſelves a Reaſon, or a pretence of Reaſon, to be Eternally undone and miſerable, becauſe the moſt are ſo. The *Scandaliſing*, and the *Scandaliſed* World periſh together; they that bring the Peſtilential Contagion, that runs deep in their own Veins, and they that draw it in to themſelves from others. What recompence, or allay of Anguiſh will it be to us, that there were ſuch and ſuch Offences, or Cauſes of Exception to Religion, and the Ways of it? And that we ſaw they took mightily in the World, that they were generally received? When all

all is but *making* a *Covenant* with *Death*, and binding over our ſelves to it: Can there be any Cauſe juſt enough, why we ſhould be Damned, and loſe our ſelves for ever? Or will it ſatisfie us for our Souls, that others periſh with us?

2. It is therefore every Mans Intereſt, to arm himſelf with all the Reaſons he can againſt *Scandal*, (as there are ſufficient) and to reſiſt this *Enemy* at the very *Gates*. It is only that we are deeply *Scandaliſed* firſt againſt Religion, that we go up and down, as it were inquiring for *Scandal*, for ſome to *Scandaliſe* us, and to give us further ſhew of Reaſon againſt being Religious: Were our Hearts but true to Religion, we ſhould eaſily find, they are *more*, and *ſtronger*, that are *with it*, than that are *againſt it*. If our *Eyes were opened*, the Reaſons for Religion are like a *Mountain full*
2 *Kings*. 6. 17. *of Charriots and Horſes of Fire*, that cannot be reſiſted. Our buſineſs therefore is not, if we ſincerely reſolve, that *we* and *our*
Joſh. 24. 17. *Houſe* ſhall *ſerve the Lord*, to ſearch every where for *Offences* againſt ſuch a reſolution; but to find out the preſſing and undeniable Arguments why we ſhould ſo reſolve to fortifie our ſelves againſt all the ſeeming pretences to the contrary, by ſetting them before us, as *Joſhua* does before the People of *Iſrael*, to animate our ſelves the higher againſt them. That we are ſo unequally poiſed, ſo propenſe upon *Scandal*, is, becauſe our Hearts are firſt bribed toward Sin, and *Apoſtacy* from God.

3. This ſhould engage us to take heed to our ſelves, to beware of our own proper *Scandal*, the motion, prejudice, and paſſion that grows from our own falſe Underſtanding, or Luſt, and does and will *ſcandaliſe* us, though there were no other *Scandal* in the World; theſe will make us fall into Diſlike or Diſcontent with any of the ways of Holineſs and our Duty, when they do not ſatisfie our particular Apprehenſions, Affections, or Deſires. *Let us com-*
Pſal. 37. 1, &c. *mit our ways wholly to the Lord, and he will give us the de-*

ſires

fires of our hearts, a hundred fold, in our Deſign of Good even in *this Life,* in the room of what we would purchaſe with *Scandal. Let us reſt in the Lord, and wait patiently for him, and he will bring it to paſs for us. But let us not fret our ſelves in any wiſe to do Evil,* becauſe any thing in our Duty lies croſs to our inordinate Concupiſcence: We cannot *do well* in *being angry to Scandal,* for that is indeed, *to be angry to our Death; we fooliſhly pervert our own way, when ever our hearts fret againſt the Lord.* If we *love the Law of God, nothing can offend us.* If we *love God and our Brother,* we can have *no occaſion of ſtumbling or Scandal in us.*

4. Seeing *Scandals* are ſo every where abroad, and our own Hearts ſo weak on the part of *Scandal,* it is moſt neceſſary to *commit* our ſelves to *Infinite Grace,* and the *Divine Spirit,* as our greateſt Security and Protection; without which *no Fleſh could be ſaved, not the very Elect: If we ſet our love upon God, and place our truſt in him, we ſhall dwell in the ſecret place of the Moſt High,* and reſt *under the Shadow of the Almighty,* and he will *deliver us from the Snare of the Fowler,* from *noiſome Scandal, though a thouſand fall at our ſide, and ten thouſand at our right hand.* Pſal. 91. *They that be planted in the Houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God; they ſhall ſtill, being unſcandaliſed, bring forth fruit in their old-age; they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing,* not blaſted with *Scandal's East Wind, to ſhew that the Lord is upright,* a *Rock* of Security, not of *Scandal,* and there is no *unrighteouſneſs, no cauſe of Scandal in him. Oh how great is thy Goodneſs to them that fear thee, to them that truſt in thee before the Sons of Men. Thou ſhalt hide them in the Secret of thy preſence,* from the Pride of *Scandal that compaſſeth men as a Chain,* yet they are proud of it, from the *ſtrife of Tongues,* the Tongue of *Scandal, that are a World of Inquity, that are ſet on fire of Hell,* that are ſet againſt Heav'n, and *walk through the Earth,*

Pſal. 92. 13. &c.

Pſal. 31. 19.

5. We may from hence learn the great unreasonableness of being *Scandalised*, that there are so many *Scandals* against Religion not marked with Vengeance. If we consider well the state of the World, how can it be otherwise? It is neither a *Heaven*, nor a *Paradise upon Earth*, that immediately *spue out Scandal*, and having once *spued* it out, never receive it any more for ever. Nor is it a *Hell* where there is *Scandal*, *all Scandal* and *no Religion*, but *Scandal* under Divine Vengeance, *Scandal* all in a Flame with the Wrath of God, discovering what it is, so that it can intrap none any longer, but those that are its Vassals for ever.

This World then is a World of *Scandals*, and *scandalised*; only it is under a Discipline, an Administration of Grace, like an *Hospital*, a *Bethlehem* for *Lunaticks*, the *Lunaticks of Scandal*, the *Insani*, as Holy Writ calls them. They are under a gracious Provision of all Necessaries, and a Method for Cure: In the mean time, that they, that are at the height of this *Lunacy*, should throw about *Scandal* with all their might, is no more strange, than that there are Mad Men in such a *Bethlehem* at the height of Distraction: Indeed the Patience, the Bounty that God uses to these is greater, than of the most compassionate *Hospitals* generally in this world; yet no doubt they have the cruel twinges and lashes of Conscience in order to their Cure, if they might proceed to their Effect; but that their Cure grows desperate, is no more to be wondered at in the one Case than in the other. Many never come to themselves. They truly have *Devils*, and *are Mad*, *Devils* that are never *cast out*.

Others there are that are brought to a more quiet, but fallen state; others that have their *lucid Intervals*; others again that have generally fair appearance of Reason, yet not in their *Right Minds*; and lastly, some that are reduced beyond danger of relapse, but not perfect.

What Reproach is it now to Right Reason, to Sobriety, that

that *Lunaticks* of all ſorts erre from it, or that ſome rally at it, or that the very beſt among them do ſome things unbecoming to it?

No more is it that Evil Men, or Imperfect Men, not ſanctified to the Perfection of *Paradiſe*, or *Heaven*, do unſuitable to Religion, according to their ſeveral ſtates, though they do *inſanire cum ratione*, ſeem to be in their Wits and Reaſon while they do ſo.

Or that there are Infamous Malefactors, Male-contents, under the moſt wiſe and ſage Government; or Wits ill employed, that Lampoon it.

6. Let us continually *look to Jeſus*, who in himſelf ſubdued the whole power of *Scandal*, keeping ſteady and uniform Obedience to the Divine Will, and did always the things that were pleaſing to it, though *Scandals* of all ſorts preſſed in on every ſide. *Who being in the Form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet made himſelf of no Reputation, but took on him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Men; and being found in faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even to the death of the Croſs.* Phil. 2. 6.

Hereby, even by the Dignity of his Perſon, and the Profound Humility of his Obedience, he hath not only done that Honour, given that Glory to the Divine Soveraignty, and Righteouſneſs, the Glory of that Supreme Authority, as hath made Recompence for all the *Scandals* of Angels and Men, ſo far as that Soveraignty or Righteouſneſs are abſolutely concerned, whether any ſhould believe in him or not; but hath alſo made Attonement, perfect Attonement, and Reconciliation for all that do *believe* in, and *obey* him; into a ſhare of which, I make no doubt, the Holy Angelical Nature immediately entred, according to their ſtate, even from the time he was declared *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the World*; Through his Obedience and Meditaion ador'd, and applyed to, they have perſe-

ver'd free from *Scandal*, by which ſo great a part fell, upon account of which, *when the Firſt begotten came into the World, all the Angels of God Worſhipped him.* The virtue from himſelf, as the *Exemplar*, as the *Firſt-born among many Brethren*, to *whoſe Image they are Predeſtinated to be conformed*, does by degrees extirpate all the very remains of *Scandal* in his Church; and he preſents it without blame, ſpot, wrinkle, blemiſh, or any ſuch thing, (even by real and efficacious operation) before *the Eyes of Glory.* His Example alwaies ſtands before them, as the moſt abſolute and ſublime Pattern, to which, they daily are exerciſed in faſhioning themſelves. Thus *our Lord* does every way diſſolve the Works of the *Devil*, and deliver them, who by reaſon of *Scandal were all their lives time ſubject to bondage*, by deſtroying *Scandal*, and him that hath *the great Power of it*, the *Devil.*

Heb. 1. 6.

Rom. 8. 29.

7. This ſhould make Heaven deſirable to us, where no *Scandal* dwells, nor any more, ſince the *Angels* of *Scandal* were caſt out of it, can ſo much as once enter; where there is *perfect light*, without any *variation* or *ſhaddow of turning.* The *Holy ones* there are vext with *Scandal's Wiles* no more, with the Wiles of the God or Miniſters of *Scandal*, or thoſe that by his Stratagems are made any way ſerviceable to it.

8. It makes Hell more dreadful; the ſeat, and Center, the Fund of *Scandal*, where all the good Principles men have had, or ſeem'd to have while they were in the World, or the Church, the beſt ſtate of this World, and their Temporary good Actions are all ſwallowed up, and by the great power of *Scandal* turned all into it ſelf; wherein all the temporary, partial Righteous men of this World, whoſe being *Scandaliſ'd* as to the main, the true love of God, and his *Children*, turned their beſt things now into a ſort of *Splendida peccata*, better complexioned ſins, have then all that *they ſeemed to have taken from them.* And by reaſon

reaſon of that great *Stumbling Block, the Eternal loſs of God, They turn from all their Righteouſneſs, and all that they have done is not remembred to them any more for ever. They ſink into that unpardonable Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Spirit*, which is an irreconcilable Enmity to what is known to be of God, undeniably of him, and that Enmity expreſſed in the proper language of *Scandal*, *Blaſphemy*; and is never forgiven, whether committed in *this World*, or that *which is to come*.

Now what is there more dreadful to the mind, that hath any thing remaining of an Ingenuous ſenſe towards God, that hath but ſo much Love, and Reverence towards him, (though too faint for true ſaving Grace) as will anſwer a profeſſion of God, and the Lord Jeſus, but will be horribly afraid at the ſuppoſition of ſuch a hatred of God, ſuch a *Blaſphemy* of him, and ſo of Hell on this account, that every ſin boils up there into this Height of *Scandal*.

9. We are dreadfully warned from being the Miniſters of *Scandal*, either through Deſign, or through great Falls, and Miſcarriages in our Religious Courſe; this we ought to take care of, in Relation to the World in general, but eſpecially towards the *Little ones*, that *believe in Chriſt*; ſtronger Chriſtians are moſt out of our danger, who grieve, or have a juſt Zeal againſt our *Scandals*, but in the mean time themſelves *grow ſtronger*, and ſtronger, as Trees that caſt their Roots the deeper, for being aſſailed with the Winds: But the *Little ones* are, in the Eye of Chriſt, of the tendereſt concern, becauſe they need it moſt.

While we are in the way of our Duty, if any receive *Scandal*, and are reſolved to do ſo, they create it to themſelves, we muſt *let them alone*; but in all things wherein we can *ſave a Soul from Scandal*, let us conſider the Recompence, we *ſave a Soul from Death*, and *hide a multitude of Sins*; a glorious Reward without any more.

And

And herein let us always remember, we have an *Eminent Seat of Doctrine*, not to *Scandalise* for the sake of *Indifferent Things*, a Doctrine prepared on purpose for all Ages of the Church of Christ, concerning *Indifferents*, one of the Eminent Seats of Doctrine of the New Testament, and more particularly in relation to *Scandal*, and therefore by no means to be lightly regarded.

To Conclude all; that we may neither give nor receive *Scandal*, three things are most necessary, to which I shall subjoin great Counsels of Scripture in each Case.

1. That we have our Judgments well settled within our selves, in all the substantials and necessary points of true Religion, upon a *Divine*, and not an *Humane assurance* only, that in that part we may neither *Offend*, nor receive *Offence*, for which *Solomon's* Advice is our great Security. *Bow down thine Ear to the Words of the Wise, and apply thy Heart to my Knowledge: For it is a pleasant thing, if thou keep them within thee, they shall withal be fitted in thy Lips: That thy Trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee: Have I not Written to thee excellent things in Counsels and Knowledge? That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of Truth, that thou mightest answer the words of Truth to them that send unto thee.*

Prov. 22. 7.

Or those Admonitions of the *Apostle Paul*.

That we henceforth be no more as Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the sleights of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lye in wait to deceive. But following the Truth in Love, we may grow up into him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; From the whole Body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that, which every Joint supplieth, according to the effectual working, in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body, to the edifying it self in Love. Be not carried about with divers and strange Doctrines. For it is a good thing

Eccles. 4. 14.

Heb. 13 9.

that

that the Heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace; not with Meats, which have not profited them, that have been exerciſed therein.

2. That we have a true and ſincere Love of the Divine Law, and our Obedience to it; the *Bleſſedneſs* of which, and its great preſervation from *Scandal*, the *Pſalmiſt* thus deſcribes. *Bleſſed is the Man that walketh not in the Counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of Sinners, nor ſitteth in the Seat of the Scornful: But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in that Law doth he meditate Day and Night: And he ſhall be like the Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, that bringeth forth his Fruit in due ſeaſon; his Leaf alſo ſhall not wither, and whatſoever he doth ſhall proſper.* Pſal. 1. 1.

3. That we order all things of Indifferency in Religion aright, both as to the Senſe of our own minds, and the Edification of others. To which purpoſe, the *Apoſtles* Directions ſhould be always before us.

The Kingdom of God is not Meat nor Drink, but *Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy, in the Holy Ghoſt.*

Let every Man be fully perſwaded in his own Mind. Rom. 14. 5, 17.

Give no Offence neither to the Jews *nor* Gentiles, *nor to the Church of God, even as I pleaſe all men in all things, not ſeeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved: Whoever thus ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.* 1 Cor. 10. 32.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Several miſ-pointings, and litteral miſtakes, the Candid Reader is deſired to obſerve, and pardon; and what is moſt injurious to the Senſe, thus to Correct.

PAge 6. line 32. for *an* read *all*. p. 13. l. 22. for *they* r. *the*. p. 17. l. 12. *dele not*. p. 18. l. 11. for *at* r. *with*. p. 25. l. 30. for *he* r. *any one*. p. 27. l. 30. for *parity* r. *parity*. p. 38. l. 4. for *Righteous* r. *wrath*. p. 44. l. 24. *dele them*. p. 48. l. 17. for *rule* r. *rate*. p. 55. l. 22. after *are* r. *not*. p. 61. l. 9. for *Sacrifice* r. *Sacraments*. p. 76. l. 29. for *Party* r. *Polity*. p. 79. l. 11. after *juſtly* r. *may*.

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4368